# COMMUNICATION AND COUNTER HEGEMONY IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICA: CONSIDERATIONS ON A LEFTIST MEDIA THEORY AND PRACTICE

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I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities, University of Natal, Durban. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

In South Africa the left-wing is currently in an ascendant mode. Yet it is not an unproblematic ascendancy. For one thing, because Marxism has been interwoven with so much of the South African struggle, the South African Left are now unable to disentangle themselves from the contemporary 'collapse of the Marxist dream'. And this translates into a South African socio-political issue because as the Left accumulates influence and power in South Africa so the problems and limitations of historical materialism acquire a wider social significance.

This thesis will argue that a key problem with the historical materialist paradigm has been its limitations when dealing with communication and the media. However, there have been historical materialists (usually those who consciously stepped outside 'mainstream Marxist' discourse) who made considerable advances in attempting to develop historical materialism's capacity for dealing with communication, the media and the subjective. This thesis will examine some of the work which has attempted to 'reconstruct' historical materialism away from a narrow materialism. The aim will be to give some direction to the development of a New Left approach to communication. Such a reconstruction is seen as a precondition if the Left-wing is to find a formula for dealing with Information Age relations of production.

A New Left communicology able to deal with the 'superstructuralism' of the Information Age offers a specific perspective on how to construct a development strategy for South Africa. This will be discussed, and the thesis will attempt to tie together the notions of communication, development and democracy.

The relationship between communication and democracy will be especially important for the New Left approach that will be favoured in this thesis. So an important theme in the thesis will be the question of developing a left-hegemony based upon a democratic-pluralism. This will entail examining the role that media and an institutionalised social-dialogue can play in building a left-wing democracy. The extent to which the left-wing media in South Africa have contributed to a democratic dialogue is discussed. This will then be extended into a discussion of how media can contribute to the reconstruction, development and democratization of a leftist post-apartheid South Africa.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADJ - Association for Democratic Journalists
ANC - African National Congress
AWB - Afrikaner Weerstand Beweging
AZAPO - Azanian Peoples Organization
BC - Black Conscioussness
BCM - Black Consciousness Movement
CAL - Cape Action League
CCS - Contemporary Cultural Studies
CCCS - Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (Birmingham School)
CCMS - Centre for Cultural and Media Studies (previously CCSU)
CCSU - Contemporary Cultural Studies Unit
COMECON - Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (ie. the USSR, Eastern Europe and Mongolia)
COIN-OPS - Counter Insurgency Operations
COSATU - Congress of South African Trade Unions
CP - Conservative Party
DDA - Durban Democratic Association
DMI - Directorate of Military Intelligence
DMTG - Durban Media Trainers Group
DP - Democratic Party
DTA - Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (of Namibia)
ECC - End Conscription Campaign
EEC - European Economic Community
FAWO - Film and Allied Workers Organisation
FOSATU - Federation of South African Trade Unions
FFF - Five Freedoms Forum
HNP - Herstigte Nasionale Party
IDASA - Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa
ISA - Ideological State Apparatus
JMC - Joint Management Centre
JODAC - Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee
MDM- Mass Democratic Movement (an 'alliance' between UDF and Cosatu)
MK - Umkonto we Siswe (ANC's military wing)
MNC - Multinational Capitalism
MRC - Media Resource Centre
MWASA - Media Workers Association of South Africa
NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NF - National Forum
NIS - National Intelligence Service
NEUM - New Unity Movement
NOVAW - Natal Organisation of Video and Allied Workers
NP - National Party
NSMS - National Security Management System
NUSAS - National Union of South African Students
NWIO - New World Information Order
PAC - Pan African Congress
PCs - Personal Computers
PFP - Progressive Federal Party
RSA - Repressive State Apparatus
SACP - South African Communist Party
SABC - South African Broadcasting Corporation
SADF - South African Defence Force

SAHA - South African History Archive
SAP - South African Police
SASJ - South African Society of Journalists
SP - Security Police
SSC - State Security Council
SATV - South African Television
TASA - Teachers Association of South africa
SWAPO - South West Africn Peoples Organization
UBJ - Union of Black Journalists
UDF - United Democratic Front
UDUSA - Union of Democratic University Staff Associations
USA - United States of America
USSR - Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WHAM - Win Hearts and Minds
WIP - Work in Progress
WOSA - Workers Organisation for Socialist Action

CHAPTER 1:

RETHINKING THE LEFTIST STRUGGLE IN SOUTH AFRICA

A struggle between the Left and Right in South Africa intensified after 1976 [1]. The resolution of this struggle during the 1990s will seemingly grant considerable power to the Left (a reversal of trends in other parts of the world). This makes South Africa an important contemporary focal point for social theorists. It is thus hardly surprising to find Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCS) theorists engaged in trying to understand the South African phenomenon, and in the process often re-working CCS itself (Tomaselli, Tomaselli, Louw & Chetty, 1988; Tomaselli, 1988; and Muller & Tomaselli, 1989).

During the 1970s CCS theorists of the Birmingham School were closely tied to the growing LEFTIST concern at the 'collapse of the Marxist dream'[2] -- a collapse first significantly manifested within the Western European communist parties of the 1970s (and spreading to Eastern Europe in the 1980s). This collapse was associated with the failures of Marxist-Lenininism. However, because Marxism, and then Marxist-Leninism had come to dominate so much of the leftist discourse, a collapse of <u>this particular interpretation</u> of leftist praxis rippled through the entire left-wing, negatively affecting even those leftist positions outside (and often opposed to) the Marxist-Leninist camp. Thomas Kuhn (1974) notes how once a paradigm becomes dominant, this ascendant position tends to wipe out the memory of an era when this was not the case. So it is that many leftists (both Marxist and others) have 'forgotten' that Marx had to engage in battles with other leftist positions (eg. Bakunin, Proudon, Lasalle and Feuerbach) in order to establish the hegemony [3] of his particular vision (see Kolakowski,

1981: Vol 1). Following Marx's success, Marxism became 'naturalized' as 'mainstream' leftist discourse; a naturalization that was institutionalized by the Second International (1889-1914). The next battle was between Lenin's interpretation of Marxism and that of Bernstein's (social-democracy). Lenin won and his success was naturalized and institutionalized by the Third International (1919-1943). The hegemony of the Marxist and Marxist-Leninist interpretation/s was never absolute within the Left: there were always many socialisms. However, the hegemony of Marx, and later of his Leninist followers certainly exerted a very powerful narrowing influence on leftist theory and practice.

If the crisis and disintegration of Marxist-Leninism is not to be translated into a full-scale rout of the entire 'leftist project' (see Robertson, 1985: 181), then some 'new thinking' on the Left is now urgently required (see Habermas, 1990). The collapse of Eastern Europe, to some extent, transported the left back to the fluidity of the 1850s-1860s. The era when so many simply acquiesced to the idea that there was one 'correct' definition of what it means to be 'leftist', is over. The possibility for debate and new thinking is consequently opened up. Such rethinking will have to break out of the bounds of all past 'naturalizations' and methodological 'purities'. The rethinking will require an openness to the full range of leftist possibilities from anarchist to social-democrat, and for a diversity of 'mixes' between these. (Furthermore, for the purposes of such debate the 'zone' where social democrat blurs into 'liberal' should not be too clearly demarcated). However, because Marxism and Marxist-Leninism have become so deeply entangled with the left-wing project as a whole, any 'rethink' will need to work from this legacy (which contains both

negative and positive features). This will require an engagement with historical materialism. Ultimately, however, I would agree with Habermas' (1979) view that it is an engagement that will require a reconstruction of historical materialism.

CCS represents one particular attempt to rethink leftist praxis and to deal with the 'collapse of the Marxist dream'. In dealing with this collapse CCS turned to an examination of the relationship between communication and power within historical material contexts. A European leftist to have also moved in this direction was Jurgen Habermas (1990). CCS is thus a 'New Leftist' [4] attempt to 're-formulate' historical materialism in a way that this paradigm can meet the challenges of a multinational 'Information Age' capitalism; the 'post-modern' era; and the methodological problems (theoretical and practical) within Marxism. Much of the collapse of the Marxist dream has been due to inertia (one might even say a conservatism): many Marxists -- especially Marxist-Leninists -- clung to a view of the world that was rooted in Victorian capitalism (the mode of production confronted by Marx himself) (see Habermas, 1990: 11-12). As the capitalist mode of production mutated into the electronic and Information Age, many Marxists got left behind. The New Left-oriented CCS attempted to deal with the 'new' capitalism wherein the superstructures had become so dominant. For CCS, a left-wing concern with challenging capitalism meant coming to grips with communication, culture, ideology, and hegemony (Hall et al, 1980). In other words, it meant coming to terms with superstructural phenomena, and the relationship between superstructural phenomena and power relationships (wherein power relationships were understood to have both material and

subjective dimensions). CCS was an intellectual intervention aimed at understanding, and/or redressing the declining intellectual and political (hegemonic) fortunes of the Left within a world where capitalism, instead of withering away, was becoming stronger. As Richard Johnson (director of the Birmingham School) said, this intellectual interventionist approach manifested itself in a CCS concern with the "relationship between academic knowledges and political aspirations" (Johnson in Punter, 1986: 277).

CCS subsequently migrated to South Africa in the 1980s (Tomaselli et al 1983; Tomaselli, 1985a, 1986b; Muller & Tomaselli, 1989; and EKUS, 1989). This migration took place as a part of the rapid importation and proliferation of many leftist theories into South African academe. (This trend was a reversal of the declining fortunes of leftist theories in First World academe). This growth of a significant South African academic-left was a parallel development to the emergence of a strong internal leftist constituency following the Soweto uprising in 1976. In South Africa, CCS faced many of the same concerns as those which had confronted the 'New Left' in Europe or North America, which is not surprising given the international nature of multinational capitalism, and the international crisis of Leftist praxis. For this reason, criticising South African CCS for being "harnessed to European intellectual climates" (Masilela, 1988) is a spurious argument. However, South African CCS also faced some unique and contextually specific concerns.

The South African Left [5] -- both within the South African Communist Party (SACP) and without -- finds itself in the peculiar position of being relatively ascendant at a time when the Left (in its various forms) is in decline and crisis elsewhere in the world. In

fact, the South African Left faces the real prospect of inheriting some degree of power during the 1990s. However, this power will almost certainly be 'diluted' because it will be 'shared' with sections of the old ruling hegemony. This possibility of power raises numerous questions and problems, especially around the issue of how a (leftist) counter-hegemony transforms itself so as to become hegemonic in society. This is made especially problematic given the declining fortunes of the Left elsewhere, and given the legacy of distorted leftist praxis in its Leninist-Marxist form. For CCS, a 'New Left' initiative concerned with the superstructures, and embedded within the broader South African Left, presents a fascinating context for engagement.

Meeting the challenge of engaging with this context calls for a critical appraisal of (local and international) Leftist theory and practice. Hence in the current context, raising and discussing questions becomes a valuable exercise; and not necessarily with a view to finding hard and fast 'New Leftist' solutions to the questions. Quite the opposite -- given the disasters that have resulted from the past leftist orthodoxies that have congealed from previous struggles, one might hope that those involved in the South African struggle will desist from codifying and reifying any of their 'solutions'. In fact, CCS holds that any 'solutions' given would vary, and indeed change, depending on the position (historically and materially) of the person dealing with the issue to be solved. Further, a solution offered would vary depending on the power relationships in which such a person found him/herself, and the discourse into which s/he were interpellated at that historical material juncture. Hence this thesis will not provide

'solutions'; rather it seeks primarily to raise questions, problems and challenges from a South African 'New Left'/CCS perspective. But, in the very act of raising and discussing questions, 'answers' emerge. These 'answers', however, must be seen to be 'relative' and historically materially specific -- ie. they are embedded in a particular moment. They can mean little more than that which their specificity gives them.

Problems/challenges for the South African Left in the early 1990s are the following:

* Since February 1990 the internal context has changed -- this requires a new approach to left-wing mobilization and organization. What was appropriate for counter-hegemonic resistance is not necessarily appropriate for building hegemony. For example, due to years of bannings, state harassment, and mainstream media hostility etc, the South African Left failed to communicate with the non-left. This is, in part, tied to the emphasis on in-group solidarity as a clandestine organizing principle. The changed context requires that the Left redefines its notion of 'struggle' into a form appropriate to winning votes and building alliances between different constituencies. It should be of concern to leftists that the main leftist nodal point -- the African National Congress -- had difficulties, during the first year of its unbanning, in restructuring itself into a form of struggle that fitted the changed needs.
* The collapse of East European Marxist-Leninism deprived the South African Left of an ally, and sources of finance. Leninists-Marxists had traditionally chosen to serve the interests of people who had become revolutionary because of their conditions of impoverishment. As the 20th Century progressed, this was increasingly manifested in

Soviet support for national liberation movements in the Third World [6] -- like the ANC. At the same time the Soviets rejected socialists (such as the British Labour Party) who served the interests of the 'labour aristocracy' of the First World. The collapse of East European 'state socialism' therefore greatly strengthened the hand of the South African Right in the battle for hegemony. (This seems to have been one important reason behind the National Party (NP) government's shift from armed conflict to 'negotiations' in February 1990). The East European model may only have represented one particular form of a broad range of positions constituting 'the Left' (Robertson, 1985: 181). However, the collapse of this model sent ripples through the entire spectrum of left-wing positions. Ironically, even the position of the South African non-Stalinist left (who have been long-critical of Stalinist state socialism) -- such as the popularists, the 'New Left', and even Trotskyists -- has been seriously weakened by the events of 1989 in Eastern Europe. Hence the 'New Left' and/or CCS now face many of the same challenges/problems posed to the wider South African Left. It is possible that in the medium-to-long term -- in a world re-ordered around the North-South axis -- that the South's (see footnote 4) control of oil-revenues may ultimately become a new source of backing for leftist opposition to multi-national capitalism (MNC). But even if this were to occur, during the short-term reshuffling following the collapse of state socialism, the Left faces significant problems.

* The East European collapse has discredited (perhaps prematurely in terms of Third World problems) the notion of social planning. Market

economics is now in favour -- a laissez faire approach that seems to complement and/or be linked to both the post-modern condition and the adoption of information technology. The irony is that in the South African context it is the very notion of planning (and state intervention), as a means of overcoming the massive socio-economic problems and mass misery, wherein lies the real appeal for socialism-as-planning. It may be that South Africa is not yet ready for a post-structural and post-modern world because of the legacy of apartheid. South Africa may first have to pass through a 'structural' or 'modern' period. But given the East European experience, the South African Left will now be forced to consider the questions of central planning versus a producers' democracy versus a market (whether capitalist or 'socialist').

* The collapse of Soviet hegemony shifted the world balance of power toward a world capitalist hegemonic ascendancy. This hegemony is closely aligned to South African centre-right forces, now represented by the 'reformed' National Party and its allies). This would be a real political and economic threat to South African leftists should they win the first one-person-one-vote elections.
* The ascendancy of world capitalism also dramatically increases the probability of the South African left being co-opted, rather than becoming ascendant. South Africa could become just another Third World dependency of multinational capitalism (MNC), ruled by a comprador ruling elite. (See Fanon, 1968, for a discussion of such social formations). In other words, the South African struggle may still be co-opted (in a manner similar to the way elements of the Kenyan Mau-Mau were transformed into a tame 'nationalist' comprador class). With the world balance of power having shifted in favour of

MNC, the local Right's position has been greatly strengthened. The Right, in conjunction with world-MNC forces, will almost certainly invest considerable energy into co-opting sections of the Congress alliance into a comprador relationship with MNC. (If this succeeds, this will insert South Africa into an alliance with the North in a North-South polarized world). Such a co-opted group would, of course, be in a position to trade upon prior links to 'the struggle'. And, by manipulating calls to 'solidarity', this group will be in a strong position to construct a reified hegemony. Such a comprador group with prior 'struggle' links will even be in a position to effectively use 'socialist' rhetoric as a means of engendering mass support, while <u>de facto</u> serving MNC interests. (In other words, 'superstructural' power relationships will appear to have changed, but material power relationships will be, by and large, unaltered). If the South African Left allowed this to occur, 'socialism' would be still further discredited. One might then find the South African left ultimately congealing around other nodal points (a break-away from the Congress-alliance? PAC? AZAPO? etc) and linking themselves to the 'South' in a North-South conflict.

* Historical materialism, socialism and Marxism are facing major theoretical challenges to their validity across a wide front, ranging from the 'New Right' to post-modernists. This leftist theoretical malaise became apparent in Western Europe/North America during the 1970s (see Hanninen & Paldan, 1984), and in the Eastern Europe during the 1980 (when their 'Marxist' ruling elites seemingly 'lost their nerve' -- in part, based upon a recognition of this malaise -- and tried to unsuccessfully implement 'revolutions from above'). The

South African Left cannot operate like an island -- this world-wide crisis of leftist praxis will impact on, and hence have to be dealt with, in the local context. Both locally and internationally the 'New Left' are in a better position to deal with the malaise/crisis because, unlike orthodox Marxists, the 'New Left' has developed a theoretical tradition of both acknowledging and trying to deal with the inadequacies of orthodox historical materialism, socialism and Marxism. In the process, the New Left has developed a storehouse of leftist conceptual tools which offer some hope of finding a way out of the crisis.

* A new mode of production -- centred on information technology and instantaneous world-wide electronic communication -- has become dominant in the era of MNC. Once more capitalism has demonstrated a capacity for mutating and evolving (in ways unforeseen by Marx) in such a way as to confound the predicted collapse of capitalism. Orthodox historical materialism (and conventional socialism) has shown itself to be ill-equipped to analytically deal with this new mode of production and social relations wherein the superstructures are so dominant. This thesis will give prominence to both the Frankfurt School and Enzensberger's challenge to Marxists over this issue.

* What constituency should the South African Left seek to serve? -- the working class (ie. virtually a 'labour aristocracy' in contemporary South Africa?); an alliance between the working class and the lumpen proleteriat?; or an alliance between the working class and the petit bourgeoisie (a petit-bourgeoisie increasingly becoming the 'workers' who staff the electronic communication network)? and so on. Dealing with choices such as these will create tensions within the Left. The

choice of a constituency will have enormous consequences -- for example, if the 'Leninist' route (to serve the weakest and most disadvantaged) is chosen, an on-going conflict with MNC will result. If, on the other hand, a social-democrat ('Bernstein') approach is adopted -- ie. serving a labour aristocracy (an 'aristocracy' which may include both workers and the petit bourgeoisie) -- then serious conflict with MNC will be avoided.

* The South African Left's constituency has expectations which are so high that they are unlikely to be fulfilled in the short-to-medium term (if ever). Amongst a significant grassroots sector of this constituency, these expectations are often linked to a 'cut-and-paste' Marxism/socialism, which manifests itself as a shallow rhetoric. This is likely to put a severe strain on any future Leftist hegemony.

Solving the above problems/challenges presents the South African Left with the prospects of intense activity (theoretical and practical) for at least the short to medium term. A New Left initiative like CCS offers one of the potential (leftist) approaches for dealing with these above problems/challenges. Each approach will have its strengths and weaknesses. Each has its place in tackling the unfolding social problems of South Africa. But given the less than ideal track record of the 'non-New Left' approaches, both overseas and locally, the importation of CCS into South Africa seems a valuable exercise: applying CCS to this context may just throw up some useful insights and 'solutions' that the other Leftist approaches will 'miss'. In particular, a South African-based CCS (situated amidst such stark re-orderings of power relationships during the next decade) potentially

has much to contribute in the field of developing an understanding of the relationship between power and superstructural arrangements (eg. culture, knowledge, ideology, and the media). Further, because a South African CCS will be witness to a shift from counter-hegemony (ie. struggle) to a Leftist hegemony, considerable potential exists for developing an understanding of a praxis of culture, knowledge, ideology and the media.

DEFINING 'THE STRUGGLE'

Before one can 'rethink' the struggle, it is first necessary to define what 'the struggle' is and/or has been. Amongst the South African Left the term 'the struggle' has been so extensively used that it has tended to become cliched or rhetorical. Yet beneath the appearance of this cliche lay a process all too real for those caught up in a society engaged in the civil war of the 1980s. Hence, terms like 'the struggle' became too important to be ignored, or worse still, dismissed as mere rhetoric, or cliched. Rather, a term like 'the struggle' merits being moved out of the realm of rhetoric, with its substance, descriptive and explanatory power being recognised. This is of particular importance for those engaged in applying CCS to the South African context, since CCS is, as Richard Johnson has noted, concerned with the "relationship between academic knowledges and political aspirations" (in Punter, 1986: 277). A CCS in South Africa will be centrally concerned with 'the struggle' and its relationship to the superstructures.

The point about the notion of 'the struggle' is that it has meant different things to different people. In part, this is deliberate: movements like the African National Congress (ANC) and United

Democratic Front (UDF) have been characterised as being multi-class, multi-party, multi-ethnic, multi-religious 'movements' or 'alliances'. This meant that a 'vagueness' when it came to policy was an advantage in the 1980s. Defining too closely what 'the struggle' was and what its aims were would have been counter-productive for the construction of the broadest possible alliance against apartheid. Since the unbanning of the ANC in 1990, however, this vagueness has, to some extent, become a liability in the process of constituency building for a future election (particularly since the ANC lost the 'middle ground' following its unbanning).

However, perhaps the very 'vagueness' of the notion of 'the struggle' in part served to 'define' it in the South Africa of the 1980s: the notion acquired sufficient substance for it to have a recognisable 'meaning'. Those in the Left 'alliance' knew they were involved, and knew what they meant by 'struggle'. Those outside and opposed to the 'alliance' were aware of its existence and their hostility to it. Applying Robertson's (1985: 30; see footnote 1) definition of 'left-wing' and 'right-wing' to to those 'inside' and 'outside' the alliance helps to give some substance to what the struggle meant.

A key feature of the anti-apartheid struggle is that most South African Marxists and social democrats threw in their lot with the left-wing Congress alliance. The SACP forms an important part of the Congress movement, and has 'backgrounded' the notion of 'class struggle' through its adoption of the 'two-stage' theory of revolution. The United Democratic Front (UDF) attracted, amongst others, many of the country's social democrats; and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has provided a home for workerists. By the end of the

1980s the ANC, UDF, COSATU and SACP collectively constituted the components of the left-wing mass democratic movement (MDM). Within the MDM constituency, socialists and Marxists formed an important, and growing, sub-constituency, especially since this grouping had its base amongst especially the black youth which is demographically on the increase. In this sense South Africa has gone against the international trend -- South Africa in the 1990s is a place where communists and socialists have a significant mass following. To some extent this mass following developed as a result of 40-years of the NP-government's virulent anti-communist and anti-socialist propaganda. Hatred for the NP's apartheid policies was translated into an 'adherence' for that which the NP opposed. At one level then it is an 'adherence' that sometimes takes the form of a shallow 'cut-and-paste Marxist' rhetoric at the grassroots level of political organization. But at another level, the success of communism and socialism in South Africa is the outcome of the realistic flexibility of South African leftist theoreticans and practitioners, who adopted a popularist 'revisionism'.

What is clear is that socialism -- in both its Marxist-Leninist and other forms -- has become a significant factor in contemporary South Africa. South African socialists have adopted two different strategies for furthering their constituency's interests: (1) through a popular-alliance; and (2) through a workerist (trade unionist) route. The workerists -- seeing class conflict as central -- seek to organise a specifically working class constituency so that, if in a post-apartheid society, the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie are ascendant, the working class (socialists) will have an organised voice.

The popularists have down-played 'class struggle' in favour of a broad anti-apartheid struggle, a key feature of the struggle, having represented the position of the ANC and UDF. Even COSATU and the SACP have subsumed themselves into this popularist alliance (although tensions can be expected to develop over time along the currently muted popularist-workerist cleavage). The result was the growth of a Left-alliance that had a membership wider than only communists and socialists (ie. it also successfully incorporated nationalists, social-democrats and even some liberals into a leftist project). Communists and socialists within the popular alliance have then either not been Marxists or they have been de facto 'practical' revisionists. It is this de facto (practical) revisionism which is of central significance for this thesis: there is a need to formalize this 'revision' and to theoretically 'rethink' what is meant by 'the struggle' and 'the Left' within such a popular alliance. It is thus the popular-alliance strategy, of both the MDM and the ANC, which interests this writer. This is because such a strategy may have been pragmatic, but it significantly ALTERED Marxist theory: it means that the South African 'struggle' did not conform to a Marxist (ie. class) one, although it contained significant proletarian and Marxist voices. The lessons for leftist praxis are clear. The success of Marxism in South Africa would appear to be tied to the pragmatic 'revisionism' adopted by Marxists and socialists over decades of work within a popularist struggle. Through this pragmatism, the South African Left came to represent a constituency very similar to that of Solidarity in Poland; but with a major difference -- whereas in Poland, labels like 'socialist' and 'Marxist' are dirty words, in South Africa they are adopted with pride by this Leftist constituency. For this reason, South Africa seems

destined to be the last major country in the world in which 'Marxists' (and even Leninists) will have a significant influence over policy.

This gives the South African struggle a significance beyond South Africa itself. This scenario places a particular burden onto the shoulders of the South African Left -- to demonstrate that 'socialism' and 'democracy' are not counterpoles (an impression that the legacy of Leninist vanguardist rule in Eastern Europe has left). If socialism is to have meaning it needs to derive from a grassroots base, and hence should be inseparable from democracy. A challenge is to actually construct such a democratic-socialism. A key assumption in this thesis is that the construction of such a democracy will be centrally tied up with the communication policy and media infrastructure in society. The Information Age has developed the technology for an interactive democracy (public sphere). If the Left is serious about empowering 'the masses' then it has to demonstrate a 'trust' for those same masses (something that vanguardism does not do) -- this means putting in place a dialogical 'public sphere' which would enable the grassroots to make themselves heard. This conception of a Left hegemony is premised upon a move away from not only vanguardist leadership, but even away from the notion of 'consultation' with the 'masses' (a notion which can still serve 'vanguardist' ends). Instead of 'leadership' or 'consultation' it is premised upon the idea of mass 'participation'. A Left hegemony built upon these principles should be in a position to facilitate the achievement of the 'real' wishes of the majority (as these wishes shift over time), and hence avoid another Eastern Europe.

NEW FORMS OF STRUGGLE REQUIRED

The unbanning of the ANC and other anti-apartheid organizations in February 1990 significantly altered the terrain of struggle in South Africa. With the prospect of one-person-one-vote elections the Left will need to reorient itself away from an emphasis on a vanguard-led armed struggle, mass mobilization and diplomatic foreign manoeuvers towards electoral politics and hegemonic alliance-building. During the first year of its unbanning, the ANC experienced some difficulty in achieving such a re-orientation (See editorials in WIP, No 69, 1990; and WIP No 70/71, 1990). This greatly weakened the leftist position as 1990 unfolded. The popularist policy of the MDM already provides a good foundation for such an electoral-oriented struggle, but the ANC had as yet to learn how to capitalize on the experience many in the MDM acquired in the 1980s. Re-orienting the struggle towards winning an election also requires that the Left pays serious attention towards the superstructures as sites of struggle to a far greater extent than has been the case in the past. CCS is equipped to contribute to the wider Left-wing struggle with regard to both superstructural analysis and practice, and with regard to theorizing the popularist 'revision' of Marxist theory towards a New Leftist 'parliamentary' approach to hegemony-building.

In dealing with the above 'revision', this thesis will, to some extent, engage in a similar 're-thinking' of Leftist praxis as found in Althusserian and in certain post-Althusserians' work, like Poulantzas, Laclau and Mouffe, and Hindness and Hirst. For example, the (rather Maoist) Althusserian notion of granting de facto dominance to the 'autonomous' (from the material base) political Ideological State Apparatus may, after all, have value in the intensely POLITICAL

struggle for hegemony in the coming years. This is perhaps even more true of Poulantzas' modification of Althusserian theory such that class alliances are foregrounded; and socialists are given the task of actually representing interests other than those exclusively of the working class. This places the onus on the Left to move beyond 'proclaiming' rhetorically that they represent 'the People'. Instead, the Left will have to learn how to manipulate 'ideology' and 'discourse' (in the ISAs) in order to win over 'the people' (ie. not only the working class).

The Right has historically invested considerable energy in the direction of 'ideological' and communicative struggle. Between 1978 and 1989, for example, the NP-hegemony placed considerable emphasis on Andre Beaufre's (1965) concern with 'psychological' and 'communication' struggle within their counter-revolutionary programme. This is an indication of the weighting they give to this area (Louw & Tomaselli, 1989). Prior to the reforms of 1990 the NP-hegemony, however, had no 'saleable' message with which to win mass support for Rightist policies in a Beaufre/WHAM (Win Hearts and Minds) programme. But the reforms provided the NP with a potential base upon which to construct a South African-type (centre-Right) Democratic Turnhalle Alliance as it did in Namibia. Further, in the wake of the reforms, the NP utilized its knowledge of the tactics and strategy of communicative struggle built up during the 1980s to develop and propagate a new 'reform discourse'. The NP increasingly co-opted elements of MDM/ANC discourse [7] during the course of 1990-1991, so blurring the formerly easily discernible left-wing/right-wing nature of the 1980s struggle. This increases the pressure on the Left to pay attention to ideological and

communicative struggle -- ie. to 'revise' leftist praxis such that discourse and the superstructures are given serious attention. If British CCS grew increasingly concerned during the 1980s with 'revising' Leftist strategy and developing a superstructural interventionism to challenge the Thatcherist threat to the British Left (see Punter, 1986: Chapters 3 and 14), so a South African CCS will be concerned in the 1990s with the challenge that a reformed-Right (a conservative, but de-racialised capitalism) poses to the South African Left. Despite the difficulties of shifting academic methods into new contexts, CCS is a project that is transferable (Muller & Tomaselli, 1989). The South African Left must not be too hasty in rejecting the possible value of CCS' New Leftist solutions and 'revisions', formulated in the British context when they come to meeting the new challenges offered by a reformed-Right in South Africa. (For a rejection of this sort see Sitas, 1990).

Laclau & Mouffe (1985) have perhaps taken the 'revision' process to its extreme. They have been concerned with looking to groups other than the working class as potential radical agents; and considering how radical groups (and/or classes) do not 'exist-in-themselves', but have to be built through 'hegemonic labour'. For Ernst Laclau and Chantelle Mouffe the struggle is for the minds of the petit bourgeoisie within ideology (or discourse). Like Gorz (1982) Laclau & Mouffe abandon the working class. This thesis will NOT go as far as this. If there is some overlap between this thesis and Laclau and Mouffe, there are also some significant differences.

Whereas Laclau and Moufe were inclined towards a 'radical-liberal' rethinking of leftist struggle, this thesis will be more inclined towards a search for a 'radical-socialist'and democratic

reconstruction. In part, the difference is due to the contexts within which they work: Laclau & Mouffe are concerned with Europe/North America where economic deprivations are less sharp than those in Africa. The South African context is different: economic deprivation and class conflict are very apparent, and hence socialism (and even communism) is still on the social agenda, in a way that may appear anachronistic to those outside South Africa. A popular-alliance in South Africa will, of necessity, have to pay serious attention to (state-socialist) 'affirmative action' programmes and economic struggles. Further, in the South African context, the working class would demographically constitute the heart of the Left constituency (although in a left-alliance non-working class sectors would also be important). This would make the Gorz (1982) move appear somewhat out of place in contemporary South Africa. Consequently, the reconstruction of Leftist struggle to be examined in the chapters that follow will lean more towards the Habermasian reconstruction of historical materialism model.

From the post-Althusserian 'discourse' school, the thesis will, at most, be inclined toward Nicos Poulantzas' concern with political (superstructural) struggle and alliances (including a socialist concern with certain non-working class interests), rather than a full-blown shift into 'discourse' (superstructuralism) per se. Utilizing Poulantzas means that a concern for pluralism and democracy is built into the socialist reconstruction being proposed. CCS is well placed to examine how these Eurocommunist ideas can be critically integrated into the South African struggle such that their overt idealism (ie. abandonment of the 'material' within historical materialism) is

avoided, while their sophisticated grasp of ideology and the superstructures are appropriated. CCS has traditionally used Antonio Gramsci's work to steer itself clear of idealism. A reading of Gramsci and Poulantzas in unison offers a means of building a Left-wing respect for a (leftist) democracy constructed upon a healthy pluralist civil society. In other words, a socialist democracy is conceptualized within which the Left has to engage in ideological-labour to win popular support for socialist policies (rather than to 'proclaim' support). In this view a single political party or movement does not replace civil society (eg. in Eastern Europe civil society was collapsed into the Communist Party). Rather, civil society becomes a 'space' for dialectical engagement -- a valuable terrain of struggle -- and a 'space' to be cherished if the social dialectic is not to be killed. In this regard, Habermas wrote:

> Everyone should be justified in expecting that the institutionalization of the process for the non-exclusive formation of public opinion and democratic political will can ratify their assumption that these processes of public communication are being conducted rationally and effectively ... which ought to ensure that all socially relevant questions can be taken up and dealt with thoroughly and imaginatively until solutions have been found that, while respecting the integrity of every individual and every form of social life, are uniformly in everybody's interests" (Habermas, 1990: 15-16).

A Poulantzian-type popular struggle is, above all else, premised upon alliance-building. This implies moving the superstructures centre-stage within Leftist struggle. Communication for mobilization, alliance building, organization and co-ordination is seen as central in expanding and holding together a popular alliance. Further, if socialism's influence is to be expanded within the popular alliance, this will require that the socialist constituency develops effective communication in the sense of: (1) learning to 'use' the alliance's

communication network to 'bargain' the best possible position for itself; and (2) developing rhetorical skills to 'sell' socialism to others in the alliance. Yet communication is an area that is poorly developed (relative to other areas) within historical materialism. In this regard too, the South African experience has revealed a need to RECONSTRUCT historical materialism and to develop a more systematic historical materialist approach to communication. This is of more than theoretical concern in the South African case especially if socialism is to be practically promoted within popular social structures.

A key to preventing the 'reconstruction' examined in this thesis from drifting into the sort of superstructuralism of the Laclau and Mouffe or Hindness and Hirst types will be through explicitly incorporating the 'totality' theorists (ie. the Frankfurt School, Gramsci, Volosinov and Korsch), who examine the subject- object. In this regard CCS has a tradition of drawing on a wide range of theoretical inputs (so much so that some might even regard it as eclectic) (see Bennett, et al, 1981; and Hall et al, 1981). But in meeting the challenges of the 'Leftist crisis', the South African struggle's implicit 'revisionism', and the wider post-modernist condition, CCS (in which various theoretical strands are pulled together, and reshuffled into new configurations) seems the only sensible way forward. This thesis would argue that the pool of theorists drawn upon by CCS needs to be widened still further to incorporate Habermas, the Frankfurt School, Enzensberger, Poulantzas, Volosinov, Karl Korsch, and Armand Mattelart. These theorists often have different assumptions, premises and conclusions, which is often derivative of the differing contexts they worked in. (See Chapters 2

and 3). But then, the same could be said of the structuralists, culturalists and Gramsci, which did not inhibit CCS seeking to integrate these 'positions' into a unified CCS re-interpretation of the leftist project. CCS has therefore created an interesting precedent for the 'rethinking' of leftists praxis: theoretical differences are no basis for assumed necessary incompatibility. The contemporary leftist crisis demands an openness towards theoretical experimentation rather than a retreat into methodological pedanticism.

In particular, Habermas' (1979) work on the reconstruction of historical materialism is valuable in preventing a drift into superstructuralist praxis. Habermas' reconstructive work, by working explicitly within the totality approach, prevents a superstructural analysis becoming 'detached' from a concern with the economic base. As important for an alliance-approach to struggle, is Habermas' (1974) work on the 'public sphere'. He offers the Left a communication model for dialogical (ie. democratic) organization such that civil society becomes a site of struggle. But there is a need to go 'beyond' Habermas' (1979) 'theoretical' challenge and also consider Enzensberger's (1974) 'practical' challenge to develop a 'praxis' communication. In addition, on a practical level, the experiences in Chile (Mattelart, 1983: 356- 376), Nicaragua (Mattelart, 1986), and South Africa's own Grassroots model (Louw, 1989; Johnson, 1991) are excellent examples of leftist-communication as 'democracy-in-action' (which complement Habermas' approach).

Incorporating Habermas and Enzensberger into CCS would, to some extent, give new directions to CCS. CCS would be channeled into an explicit examination of the potential role the superstructures could

play in the struggle to ensure the victory of a Left-wing hegemony over the Right-wing. Four potential roles for 'communication' are immediately apparent: communication to (1) strengthen the popular alliance through improved intra-alliance dialogue (and to counter any right-wing attempts to disrupt the popular alliance); (2) widen the Left-alliance by recruiting new sectors and members; (3) 'disrupt' the NP-alliance; and (4) 'promote' socialism within the popular alliance. (This would include working to 'expose' the anti-leftist foreign power attempts to 'confuse' and 'deflect' the course of the struggle).

A composite reading of Enzensberger (communicative praxis), Gramsci (hegemony) and Poulantzas (class fractions and alliances) would direct the New Left towards a consideration of: (a) seeking other potential allies for the Left; and (b) finding 'ways' of communicating with different sectors of the population. A Left alliance would benefit by learning to communicate with different sectors differently. The rhetorical communication methods of advertising (which are implicitly 'class-based') and public relations offer some guidance in this regard. The Congress-alliance -- if it is to expand its net -- will need to maximise its communicative impact in each sector of the population (in terms of class, language, ethnicity, occupation, local issues, etc). For Marxists to move in these directions, again requires a reconstruction of the historical materialism upon which they base their actions. In other words, there is also the need to develop rhetorical communication skills. Sophisticated media and communication skills need to be diffused throughout the Congress-alliance. In this area the NP is currently better placed than the ANC because the ruling hegemony controls a wide range of highly trained, professional communicators (journalists, PR officers, advertising specialists, media technicians,

media bureaucrats, etc).

Expanding the Leftist support-base further requires developing every communicative avenue available, from using the Rightist media where possible (a difficult, but not entirely impossible task, especially since the Right has reformed itself) to developing an 'alternative' (left-wing) media network. Where possible, such a media network should avoid 'mixing' its messages: ideally separate 'socialist', 'nationalist', and 'liberal' media should be created for the different sectors. This requires recognizing that the Left has to think beyond the 'alternative media', which, in the early 1990s, only communicated with a small section of the converted (ie. at present the total sales of all the left-wing weekly newspapers [8] is only 206 000 per week). This alternative (left) media is important, but it can only constitute one part of the overall media usage. A left-wing network was partially, but precariously, in place in the print sector in 1991. This network needs expansion in other fields, such as: radio, film, video, audio-cassette, computer-networking, etc. In addition to media-hardware, such a network requires, above all else, more trained Congress-alliance personnel. Training is required in both basic media skills, but also in more skilled media work and in media theory. Various 'alternative' media training projects have been offered in the Cape Province, Transvaal and Natal. (See Pinnock, 1990, and Mackay & Louw, 1990).

There are also considerations of 'what' message is to be communicated. Clearly, the wider the anti-apartheid alliance, the more likely it is to be successful. The larger the constituency represented the more a Leftist bloc (or alliance) will influence the outcome of the

negotiations and/or elections following on from such negotiations. It is in this regard that a Leftist bloc would be ill-advised to stress either a (Marxist) class-based conflict or a (Black Consciousness) race-based conflict. Both will alienate potential left-wing allies. Hence, 'purists' might better serve socialism by confining their activities to clear 'workerist' (trade union?) activities, and avoid alliance-building (popular) work, where their orthodoxy could alienate potential ANC allies.

Building a left-alliance also requires engaging in a struggle with the apartheid sign system, or what Keyan Tomaselli calls the "struggle for the sign" (Tomaselli, 1986b: 14). The first anti-apartheid group to recognise the importance of such mobilization through 'signs' was the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) during the 1970s. However, BCM mobilized exclusivist (racial) signs and in this way (ie. by restricting their appeal) ruled themselves out as a serious (widely-based) counter-hegemonic force. Building a Left-wing alliance requires systematically developing an alternative (counter-hegemonic) 'sign' system which is able to attract the largest possible number of people into the anti-apartheid movement. In a negotiation-type conflict an exclusivist (either class or race) sign system would be damaging to an anti-apartheid alliance, since it would presumably exclude the possibility of incorporating elements of the 'sympathetic' bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie into 'the struggle'. Incorporating the latter into the MDM during the 1980s became the task of such initiatives as the Five Freedoms Forum (FFF), the Cape Democrats, Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee (Jodac), Durban Democratic Association (DDA), etc. However, such work melted away after the unbanning of the ANC. Building an anti-apartheid counter-hegemony requires a set of

'integrative' signs which can serve to unify the various constituencies of 'the struggle'. During the 1980s both the 'Freedom Charter' and 'Mandela' took on the characteristics of such unifying signs. The activists generating such signs (as well as 'undermining' NP-hegemony signs) would benefit by more 'professionalisation' and communicative training.

Leftist South Africans within the Congress movement, to be successful, need to emulate the communicative 'professionalism' of both the NP and BCM. Socialists (Marxist and non-Marxist) within the ANC also need to concern themselves with this area to prevent being 'out-communicated' by the nationalists, liberals, and even capitalists within the Congress-alliance. But since communication has not been a 'traditional' area of concern for Marxists, some 'revision' and 'development' of the historical material paradigm is necessary, ie. South African Marxists will need to 'reconstruct' their paradigm to enable it to deal more 'effectively' with: (1) popular-alliance (multi-class; multi-ethnic; multi-religious; etc) politics; and (2) communication and communicative 'struggle'. CCS is par excellence the 'site' at which to read context and politics into communication (and vice versa), and to examine and develop the role of communication within social transformative processes. Any 'reconstruction', however, need not start from scratch because certain leftist theorists have made important moves in the direction required when they considered the issues of ideology, superstructure, culture, etc. The epistemology of this Marxist turn to the 'subjective' contains important insights, themes and lessons for any South African New Left communicology. This epistemology will be discussed in chapter 2.

THE CRISIS IN WESTERN MARXISM

Some have criticised the 'importation' of so-called 'First World' theories and debates (including left wing theories/debates) into South Africa, claiming that this is a form of neo-colonialism (see Masilela, 1988:1; and Sitas, 1984: 2-3). Such views reflect an extremely narrow nationalist-exclusivism. Certainly, from an historical material perspective, each context is unique, and so care must be taken when using a theory outside of the context in which that theory was developed. However, no context constitutes a separate island in today's world. The contemporary world is linked by a global information network and MNC relations of production. (Even the Soviet Union is now seemingly set to be incorporated into this MNC net). Given this 'globalization', no theory can be exclusively pegged to only one context. Rather, theories shift across contexts, mutating as they move (Muller and Tomaselli, 1989). So no theory is exclusively 'European' or 'African'. Both Towa and Hountondji (see Hountondji, 1983) have pointed out the limits of such arguments.

South African Leftists ignore at their own peril the so-called 'First World' theories of Western Marxists (not to mention the errors of 'Second World' East European 'Marxist' praxis). This is not to suggest that such theories should, or even can, be transported unproblematically to South Africa. Such a simple transference can result in simplistic 'cut-and-paste' Marxism (see, eg. Wigston, 1988). However, the theories (and practices) of both the First and Second Worlds have already dealt with many of the methodological problems with which the South African Left will have to resolve. This is perhaps especially true for a left-wing in ascendancy. The work of Leftist theorists outside South Africa --

perhaps especially where that work deals with the problems and crises of Marxism -- forms part of the heritage of Leftist praxis. A thorough grounding in such work is one way of avoiding the wasted energy of 're-inventing the wheel'. The ANC's Pallo Jordon (1990) appears to agree in so far as he refers to the Left's European experiences when looking at a South African left-wing problem.

It is significant to note that of all the schools of historical materialism, it is the New Left (including CCS) which has been least devastated by the collapse of East European 'state socialism'. In many of the other schools of Marxism the Soviet collapse resulted in a deep pessimism and failure of nerve. But because the New Left/CCS has acknowledged, and attempted to deal with, the problematics of historical materialism for more than two decades, the impact of the Soviet collapse has produced less of a trauma; although as Habermas (1990:10) has noted, this left "cannot pretend that nothing has happened". The collapse of state socialism has, in fact, resulted in something of a 'confirmation' of many of the critical positions adopted by the New Left and Critical Theorists. Perhaps Adorno will be proven correct -- it will be the Critical Theorists (and by extension the New Left) who will be the heirs to the Marxist legacy once the Soviet 'wrong turn' has been relegated to history. South Africa is not so historically materially specific that the failure of forms of Marxism elsewhere can be brushed aside. Neither is South Africa so specific that the attempts by Western Marxists to 're-work' historical materialism has no explanatory value here. The reverse is, of course, also true -- the Left outside South Africa could undoubtedly learn much from the South African left (for example: Davies et al, 1976; Erwin,

1985; Innes & Plaut, 1978; Lambert, 1980; Legassick, 1974; and Wolpe, 1972. See also Deacon, (1988) particularly given that in the 1990s it is only the South African Left which is in any way ascendant.

For this thesis -- with its concern about the role of communication, ideology and hegemony within a Leftist struggle -- the work of the Birmingham School is of special interest. During the 1970s CCS in Britain reflected the growing recognition that Western Marxism was in crisis. Under the directorship of Stuart Hall, the Birmingham School made significant strides in trying to come to terms with, and solve, Marxism's theoretical problems (Hall et al, 1980). Their work in this area has a relevance beyond Britain and the 'First World'.

But the Birmingham School/CCS was not alone in recognizing the problems Marxism faced. Between the two World Wars there was a recognition amongst some of the most astute Marxists that something was 'amiss' with Marxist theory and practice, especially that 'Marxism' associated with the Marxist-Leninist interpretation (and institutionalization) of leftist-praxis in the USSR. These critical theorists have been generically labelled 'Western Marxists' (Aronowitz, 1981). It is noteworthy that the attempts to 'reformulate' Marxism have, from the outset, been closely tied to a consideration (from within the historical material paradigm) of the role of the superstructures, the 'subjective', culture and communication. A central concern of the 'reformulators' was to overcome the limitations of the crude base-superstructure model associated with orthodox Marxism. In the orthodox model, struggle took place in the economic sphere -- this would roughly correspond to the workerist position in South Africa.

In a sense then, we can find the early origins of CCS in the work

of 'reformulators' like Georg Lukacs, members of the Frankfurt School, Korsch, Gramsci and Volosinov. These early theorists sounded early warning signals of what, by the 1970s, could be discerned as the coming 'collapse of the Marxist dream'. Yet they all, continued to work WITHIN historical materialism despite their recognition of methodological problems. These theorists might be termed the 'totality' group (Jay, 1984): they saw the superstructures as part of a historical material process, in which the base and superstructures were part of a dialectical totality. Struggle here was both economic (base), and political-discursive (superstructural). This 'totality' position would complement theorists of popular struggle in South Africa (although popular practice has operated somewhat differently).

Others like the Althusserians and post-Althusserians responded to the Marxist crisis by moving 'out' of historical materialism in an attempt to deal with the crisis. Neither Althusser nor Poulantzas (as Eurocommunists) would have regarded themselves as having moved 'outside' the paradigm. However, the implications of Althusser granting the superstructures 'autonomy' was to <u>de facto</u> abandon a core feature of the historical materialist/realist paradigm (see Sayer, 1979). It was Laclau and Mouffe, building on the Althusserian legacy, who took Althusser's 'autonomy' notion to its logical conclusion. As a consequence, these two scholars explicitly operate outside the paradigm, although they remain 'socialists'. These theorists might be termed the 'discourse' group: they came to see social reality (including the economic base) as being constructed in discourse. Struggle became discursive and political (ie. superstructural/ discourse-based rather than economic). This view moves very close to a

liberal position and hence complements the rather creative leftist-strategy that underpinned many of MDM 'middle ground' (eg. FFF) structures in South Africa in the 1980s.

The work of both the 'totality' and 'discourse' groups deserves serious attention from Leftists trying to deal with the contemporary 'superstructural age' and the (related?) post-modern condition (Lyotard, 1984). It can be demonstrated that the former are of direct concern for the South African Left because South Africa is integrated into the superstructural age in which communication, information and media play such centrally binding roles within MNC. Hence to argue that the totality group (eg. the Frankfurt School) is concerned with so-called 'First World' issues only is to ignore the importance for the South African Left of developing a means for dealing with the impact of the MNC Information Age on South African society.

The MNC Information Age is a 'superstructural' mode of production. Capitalism has mutated once again -- in a way unforeseen by Marx. Communication and the media have moved centre stage in MNC (at least in its heartland). To some extent this was achieved by relocating the modes of production associated with earlier phases of capitalism (eg when steel/heavy industry, or the chemical industry were dominant) to peripheral Third World areas. This may be one reason why Marx's theories (developed to deal with Victorian capitalism) still have such considerable explanatory power in the Third World. South Africa sits in an ambiguous position: in many respects it shares many of the characteristics of the newly industrialised Third World with its large (and growing) urban proletariat working in the 'dirty' heavy industries which require cheap unskilled labour. Dirty industries have been relocated here because the societies, with their massive unemployment

problems, are more concerned with 'jobs' than with the 'environment'. On the other hand, South Africa -- as a sub-metropole of MNC -- has simultaneously entered (as a marginal player) the 'superstructural age' of electronic information networks, where a significant (and growing) portion of the population is integrated into the 'second-hand reality' of a media-centric world.

The South African Left reflects the ambiguities of the South African context: 'superstructural' concerns are, as yet, marginalised within the local praxis. However, sections of the South African Left have shown themselves adept at utilizing the 'superstructural gaps' that the Information Age provided (see Louw, 1989d; Cape Educational Computer Society, nd)) -- for example, the alternative media made creative use of desk-top publishing methods (Pinnock, 1991); they made extensive use of photocopiers, and video units have been established (see Steenveld, 1991; Maingard, 1991). Media Resource Centres and media training schemes have been developed (Criticos, 1989a; and Mackay and Louw, 1990); left-oriented community libraries integrated themselves into local and world-wide computer networks using modems (Karlsson, 1989); and the Congress-alliance uses computer networking in operations, including underground military operations (eg Operation Vula). This utilization of information and communication technology constitutes a <u>de facto</u> 'superstructural practice'.

Despite this practical work, surprisingly little has been done by local leftists to theorize this superstructural work and hence to produce a coherent 'superstructural praxis' (see Tomaselli, 1988/9; Kaplan, 1991). It is this void that CCS fills by, in the first instance, sifting through the work done by Western Marxists on the

superstructures to ascertain its potential value in South Africa; and secondly, by developing a local understanding of the superstructural age as it impacts upon South Africa (so as to ensure that the local Left does not get caught in a time-warp as did the Second World Marxists).

## THE COLLAPSE OF EASTERN EUROPE

The collapse of Soviet 'state socialism' in Eastern Europe is the outcome of multiple causation, too complex to be addressed as a sub-theme in this thesis. A few brief (and hence very limited) introductory remarks are, however, necessary.

One reason for the collapse would appear to be that the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was constructed upon a larger economic base (able to, for example, extract enormous resources from the Third World, not to mention the vast natural resources of North America). Capitalist relations of production are also effectively geared to extracting maximum labour power. The USSR/Comecon, although well-endowed with natural resources, was in relative terms no match for the resource-base available to MNC. This meant that capitalism could set the pace, and it remained for the Second and Third Worlds to scurry along trying to keep up (see Bahro, 1981: 8-9).

A smaller resource-base meant it was impossible to match the arms build-up by the United States of America without severely damaging the non-military sectors of the Soviet economy. But the USSR found itself trapped into an arms race because of Lenin's interpretation of Marxism. Through this interpretation socialists served the weakest and most exploited sections of the proletariat -- who were increasingly found in the MNC-dependent Third World as the 20th Century progressed (Lenin,

1975: 101-114). Bernstein's (1961) interpretation of Marxism, would have resulted in socialism de facto serving the First World's 'labour aristocracy' instead (eg. the position of West European social democrats, and a position with which MNC appears able to co-exist). Lenin's option, on the other hand, meant an on-going conflict with world-capitalism, and hence condemned the USSR to an arms race it could not win -- which eventually (economically) crippled the socialist experiment inside the USSR [9]. Gorbachev's glasnost effectively ended the USSR's threat to MNC by terminating Soviet support for revolutionary movements around the world (with obvious serious implications for peripheral regions like South Africa).

If the arms race was not crippling enough, to make matters worse, the Comecon resource-base also had to provide for a huge bureaucratically-managed 'cradle-to-the-grave' social welfare system and a full-employment policy. Providing social welfare created an additional economic drain which multinational capitalism did not have to match. Further, a full-employment policy made any economic structural readjustment (such as those caused by shifts to new modes of production based upon new technologies) difficult to implement because it made labour immobile.

As a result, when the First World re-ordered its relations of production into the MNC-Information format around the new electronic-informatics technology, Comecon could not keep pace. For example, mass nation-wide television was only introduced in the USSR during the 1970s (Mickiewicz, 1988). Comecon did not have sufficient capital to engage in a similar economic restructuring while resources were simultaneously being poured into defence and welfare. This capital shortage was seriously exacerbated by the reconstruction required after the Armenian

earthquake and Chernobyl disasters. By not 'keeping up', the Soviet bloc fell even further behind the economic power of MNC, and hence eventually lost the capacity to even maintain parity with the NATO arms build-up (especially when the USA integrated electronic-Information Age technology into its weaponry). The USSR's weakening military position in relation to the USA was finally demonstrated in Afghanistan.

The problem was severely compounded by the conservatism and inertia (see Bahro, 1981: Chapter 9) of the bureaucrats and securocrats (the powerful nomenklatura) who did not want to engage in an economic restructuring anyway. In 'state socialism' these apparachniks developed a vested interest in maintaining existing relations of production (in this case built upon earlier steel and chemical technology) -- social and economic relations which benefited themselves. These (heavy industry) relations of production, of course, also complemented their 'inert-Marxism' derived from Marx's analysis of the Victorian capitalism. (The USSR had after all, modelled its industrialisation on a 'socialised' heavy industry Fordist model of capitalism). Soviet Marxists appeared not to go through the same soul-searching undertaken by the Western Marxists trying to come to terms with the re-ordering of capitalism into its MNC-Information format. Hence they were ill-equipped to deal with those shifts into new modes of production wherein the superstructures became more central than the material base. Soviet Marxism became inert, (ironically) conservative, and caught in a time-warp. The central planning structures that had initially served the rapid industrialization of the USSR so well, later undermined the USSR's 'socialist experiment'.

Nomenklatura inertia acted to block full use being made of

Information Age possibilities within the Soviet bloc made possible by the new 'Superstructural Age'. The new MNC information relations of production precisely appear to depend upon a lessening of the centralised control. The capacity for instantaneous world-wide communication (which increases the capacity for control, when needed) seems to have lessened the day-to-day need for rigid chains of command. Multinational capitalism loosened and granted more 'gaps' and greater autonomy. The Thatcher-Reagan championing of 'the market' is more than rhetoric -- it reflected deeper shifts within MNC. Information Age efficiency meant granting increased autonomy to First World information workers (hence the proliferation of Personal Computers (PCs); a growing pluralism in civil society (even the USA is being increasingly 'de-homogenized'); and a growing 'individuation' in the (second hand) worlds people are able to construct for themselves. (Members of the same society -- or even household -- no longer have to 'live' in the same 'world' because each can now construct their own 'lived reality' by using the information technology in different configurations). For the Soviet nomenklatura, such a superstructural 'loosening' would have been threatening to their interests (i.e. a need for centralised control). Hence, the creative possibilities inherent in making Information technology (PCs, photostat machines, etc) widely available were denied in the Soviet bloc. But as Enzensberger (1974) pointed out, the denial of such possibilities is economically destructive and results in social retardation. The events in Eastern Europe in 1989-1990 seem to have validated Enzensberger's argument.

The outcome of the above circumstances was that during the 1980s East European 'Marxist' ruling elites seemed to 'lose their nerve'. Preliminary early warning signals of the East European crisis emerged

in the 1970s in the work of certain Marxist intellectuals such as East Germany's Rudolf Bahro (1981); and Yugoslavia's Mihailo Markovic (1982) and his 'Praxis group' (Markovic & Petrovic, 1979). By the early 1980s these voices were joined by Soviet intellectuals like Boris Kagarlitsky (1988; 1990) and those in the 'Novosibirsk group' like Aganbegyan (1988). The result of the 'loss of nerve' was that these ruling elites began implementing revolutions from above during the 1980s. In certain instances these revolutions could be seen to represent a confirmation of elements of Trotsky's (1972) prediction that sections the nomenklatura would eventually transform themselves into a new capitalist class. Certain of the new (reformed) 'non-Marxist' ruling elites of Eastern Europe (eg. Hungary, Bulgaria and Rumania) reflect strong connections with elements from the previous 'Marxist' nomenklatura.

Gorbachev (1988, 1988:90) moved to 'reform' Soviet Marxism into a "socialist market". The key to this shift was the 1987 Law on the State Enterprise (Gorbachev, 1988: 86). This Law sought to take power away from the central planners (and bureaucrats) in Moscow and to place management decisions at the local grassroots level -- ie "control from below" (Gorbachev, 1988:33). Each enterprise would be controlled by a "work collective" (Gorbachev, 1988:32) who, together with the director, would be responsible for taking 'market decisions', or what Gorbachev (1988:33) calls "self-accounting and self-financing" and "self-management" (1988:47). The notion of a "work collective" remains socialist. In fact, the notion bears certain similarities to the Yugoslav and/or Markovic's (1982) proposal for grassroots worker control of production. Initially Gorbachev's model remained more

oriented towards retaining much 'central planning' (Gorbachev, 1988: 90) than Markovic's. But by 1989 the proponents of Perestroika had shifted to contemplating renting out state enterprises to "work collectives" or even to private lessees. In essence, these were moves towards de facto privatization and the abandonment of state ownership. This has seriously opened the door towards the growth of a large private sector. Speeding up moves in the latter direction is strongly advocated by Boris Yeltsin and the Inter-Regional group of Deputies, who have come to represent the interests of the the Co-operatives (ie. the proto-private sector). The challenge these reforms represent to the power of the bureaucrats and securocrats has propelled this important social sector into an alliance with the conservative United Front of Working People of Russia.

Whether the Soviet reforms end up creating a 'private sector' or a 'workers self-management sector' only the future will tell. Whichever it is, both represent the same underlying phenomenon -- a shift towards Information Age social relations (with its inherent laissez faire 'anti'-structuralist and/or anti-planning bias). So once again the USSR follows the lead of capitalism. Just as Stalin attempted to catch up to capitalism's 'steel age' by adopting Fordist methods, so now Gorbachev attempts to catch up to MNC's 'information age' by moves towards 'the market'.

Whatever the outcome internally to the USSR, the effects of Perestroika (and the related Glasnost) on Marxists (and other 'leftists') world-wide has been profound -- creating a crisis in leftist circles far deeper than Khrushchev's 1956 denouncement of Stalin. The effects on the South African Left have been ambiguous -- on the one hand the collapse of Soviet power appears to have emboldened

the NP-government sufficiently (because of the weakening of the Left world-wide) to lead to the 1990 reforms. This created a significant window of opportunity for the South African left. But on the other hand, the East European collapse strengthened the Right and weakened the Left's ability to seize this opportunity.

One possible interpretation of the East European collapse is to see it as the death-knell of socialism. This has certainly been the Rightist interpretation, and their mass media have had difficulty in containing their glee at the prospect. However, it might be that the Right's celebrations are premature. Bolshevism represented only one form of leftist praxis. Other schools of socialism exist, and while capitalism continues to exploit large sections of the world's population, the Left continues to have a potential constituency. As Habermas (1990:21) says: "the hope that humanity can emancipate itself from self-imposed tutelage and degrading living conditions has not lost its power". But if the Left is to develop a successful future praxis it will need to pay serious attention to the Second World (state socialist) disaster. This is especially true in South Africa moving toward a new social order which may reflect a strong leftist-orientation.

For South Africans then, the Comecon experience is an important lesson in what not to do. Socialism without democracy proved to be destructive to socialism (see Gorbachev, 1988: 47-48), hence the linking of Perestroika to a call for "democratization" (Gorbachev, 1990: 44). Democracy, in turn, requires an open communication flow. This forms the very basis of Habermas's democratic socialist world view which underpins the New Leftism of this thesis. Eastern Europe has

also shown the need for a healthy autonomous civil society. It demonstrates that any attempt to collapse civil society into 'The Party' undermines democracy, and thereby undermines socialism (see Markovic, 1982: ix-xi). These lessons hold serious implications for the re-construction of the South African media away from the Rightist media of the past towards a media that can serve all South Africans. For this reason it is perhaps not surprising to find, amongst the South African Left, moves toward a 'Swedish-type' print media model for South Africa (see Rhodes Journalism Review, No 1, 1990).

From an explicitly New Left perspective, one 'valuable' outcome of the East European collapse is that it demonstrated the need for historical materialism to come to terms with the work of western Marxists on, for example, the superstructures. In many respects it vindicates those in the New Left who had argued for a democratic socialism and an open communication system. The East European demise now 'empirically' demonstrates the disaster of closed communications. The Soviets tried to curtail the information flow within society and, in consequence, 'socialism' paid a heavy price. Media control helped breed social inertia which prevented Comecon from being able to shift into the new 'Information Age' mode of production quickly enough so as to remain a credible challenge to MNC.

South Africa is as yet not fully integrated into the 'Information Age'. The challenge for the Left is to steer South Africa into the 'Information Age' (ie. avoid the Comecon disaster). However, it needs to do so without becoming a dependency of MNC, and/or facilitating the reproduction within South Africa of exploitative relations of production. In short, history may have given to the South African Left an opportunity to demonstrate that democratic socialism and an advanced

economy based upon electronic-information technology are not only compatible but are complementary.

## THE NEW INFORMATION AGE

The USA has for decades represented the heart and pace-setter of the world-system of MNC. It became an 'information society' (Naisbitt, 1984: Chapter 1), based on a growing merger between the electronic media, telecommunications, computers, satellites, and so on. The proliferation of MNC is tied to the functioning of an information-technology that facilitates instantaneous world-wide electronic communications. This has become the life-blood of multinational corporations (and the related world banking and financial systems). MNC is thus systematically transforming US society into an 'information age' that has penetrated all the continents. So the shift towards 'information' in the USA has come to have great significance for the rest of the world (see Collins, 1990).

The 'information society' is the outcome of the impact of information technology on economic and human relationships within MNC, (Bell, 1973; Porat, 1977; and Beniger, 1986). A shift in the mode of production has taken place: a growing proportion of human labour is now occupied in a 'service economy' which is concerned with moving 'information' around. The resultant (MNC) 'superstructural' mode of production (which is geared towards information-processing rather than manufacturing) is, however, no less governed by the exploitative relations of production associated with capitalism. What has changed for many workers is the nature of the labour engaged in as well as their product (which has become less 'material'). In other words, the argument -- provided in Toffler (1980) and Masuda (1980) -- that the

information age is necessarily progressive is not true if measured by leftist criteria.

Naisbitt, following Daniel Bell (1973), argues that the years 1956-57 represented a socio-economic turning point for American capitalism (Naisbitt, 1984:13). During this period the USA shifted from an industrial mode of production to an information-based mode of production. (This coincided with a population shift from northern USA to southern USA). In the 1980s the rapid diffusion of technology associated with the electronic movement of information (see Smith, 1981) altered the relations of production in the First World irrevocably away from 'industry' and towards 'information' (see Bell, 1973; and Jameson, 1984). The Information Age was born in the USA but has subsequently proliferated elsewhere.

In 1950 only 17% of Americans worked in the 'information sector'. By 1984 the figure was 60% and climbing rapidly (Naisbitt, 1984:14). As David Birch said of Americans: "We are working ourselves out of the manufacturing business and into the thinking business" (in Naisbitt, 1984:17). The Thatcher revolution in Britain represented a considerable economic shift from 'industry' to 'information' (in part seen as a shift in labour from manufacturing in northern Britain to information in south east Britain). In part, the move towards an information society in the First World was facilitated by the relocation of the industrial sector -- with its pollution and need for cheap labour -- to the Third World. (This is one reason why Marxism still retains relevance in Third World societies wherein workers in manufacturing are becoming so demographically dominant). So the 'superstructural age' is one in which the First World sits astride a

world-wide information-network which (superstructurally) links the world in a way which effectively places the (First World-based) MNCs in control of the industrial-complexes which are increasingly found in the Third World. In the First World, however, it is the petit-bourgeoisie which is growing, while the percentage of workers declines. This has serious implications for a workerist-oriented Marxism. Part of the explanation of the collapse of the Marxist dream was that most historical materialists did not adjust to these shifts in MNC quickly enough.

South Africa finds itself in a curious position -- in part South Africa, like other Third World countries, is experiencing an expanding industrial sector and hence a growing working class. But the country also represents an important sub-metropole of MNC, and for this reason has, to a considerable extent, been integrated into the wider information society, albeit as a junior partner of the First World metropoles (see, for example, Kaplan, 1990). In a post-apartheid era the likelihood is that the Pretoria-Witwatersrand megalopolis will increasingly become the key organizational metropole for Africa. This will increase the rate at which South Africa is integrated into the MNC Information Age. And as South Africa is increasingly pulled into the 'superstructural age', so the crisis faced by historical materialism will become increasingly apparent (ie. it is a crisis from which not even the South African left is ultimately immune, despite what the leftist-grassroots might presently believe). For this reason the Left will find itself pulled in two directions simultaneously. The workerists will pull in one direction (and will be able to call upon the support of a considerable working class constituency), while the New Left will pull in another direction. (The New Left will, of course,

be able to point to the Second World disaster caused by inertia and/or not adjusting to the Information Age quickly enough).

What is clear is that the 'Information Age' (which took off in the 1960s and then exponentially exploded in the 1970s and 1980s) has posed, and still poses, a serious 'superstructural challenge' to historical materialism. And it is not only a 'First World' issue (as the collapse of the Second World has demonstrated). It is a challenge the South African left cannot ignore any more than can the left in other parts of a world increasingly unified by an expanding MNC network.

To date, the 'superstructural challenge' has not been particularly well met by historical materialists -- in part because historical materialists have generally been loath to take the non-material 'superstructures' seriously enough. Enzensberger went so far as to say: "So far there is no Marxist theory of the media" (1974: 96). But there are exceptions -- those working within the historical material paradigm who did challenge the orthodoxies of the rigid materialists; and who tried to re-direct the attention of the (usually unwilling) Left towards the changes taking place in capitalism, revealing serious gaps in Marxist theory and practice. Some of this work (eg. the structuralists and culturalists) has been integrated into CCS, while some (such as the Frankfurt School) has yet to be incorporated.

Some of the most important early Marxist work on the emergence of this new (superstructurally-based) mode of production was produced by the Frankfurt School from the 1930s to the 1950s. Their work on the 'Culture Industry' (see Adorno & Horkheimer, 1979) was remarkable for pointing to the growing social importance of media and culture before

media and information technology had become central to capitalist relations of production. Much of their resultant pessimism (from a Marxist perspective) which was generated before and during the Second World War has only been fully vindicated in the last two decades. Instead of attacking the Frankfurt School for their pessimism, the Left might have been better off dealing with the shifts taking place in capitalism to which the School had tried to draw attention. The School pioneered work about the superstructures of vital interest for leftists concerned with the Information Age and the (related) collapse of the Marxist dream. It is, in fact, no accident that Habermas (the most significant defender of (reconstructed) historical materialism in the contemporary 'Information' and/or 'Post Modern' world) is a direct heir to the School's approach.

Turning to the superstructures poses a number of questions. For example, when CCS approaches the superstructures, should any aspect of the 'orthodox 'base-superstructure' approach be utilized? Or should the 'totality approach' (eg the Frankfurt School, Gramsci, Volosinov, etc) be privileged? Alternatively, some might argue that a (structuralist) 'discourse approach' (Althusserian/ post-Althusserian) is the key. Certain post-modernists (such as Derrida) would argue that leftists serious about coming to terms with the contemporary conditions would have to abandon 'structuralisms', like historical materialism, completely. In its place would be put a (leftist) post-structural discourse-based deconstruction of the post-modern era. Perhaps in meeting the challenge of the 'superstructural age' and/or dealing with the contemporary world-wide Leftist crisis, the Left would benefit from an openness to each of these 'approaches' (recognizing that each has its strengths and weaknesses). This thesis, however, in

constructing a Leftist approach to the superstructural age, will foreground the 'discourse' and 'totality' approaches -- see Chapters 2 and 3. (Because the orthodox Marxist base-superstructure approach is seen to be 'too' materialist, while the post-structural approach is seen to be 'too' superstructural/idealist'). But marrying these two approaches is not unproblematic. The difficulty can best be recognized by noting that Althusser's structuralist-discourse method is explicitly anti-humanist, while the totality approach is an overtly humanist-Marxism. However, that does not make the two approaches necessarily incompatible -- after all, Volosinov succeeded in working within a 'totality' framework while dealing with 'discourse' issues.

Perhaps it is Enzensberger (1974), drawing on the Frankfurt School member, Walter Benjamin, who best expresses the challenge to the Left in the superstructural age. Developments in electronic-information technology should be seen as opportunities for a leftist social transformation. As with Habermas, Enzensberger recognized the potential modern information technology holds for (socialist) human liberation. It is a liberation that differs from that sketched out by Marx himself because it is based upon a different mode of production (ie. 'information' rather than 'heavy industry'). The information age does not have to be imprisoned within MNC relations of production. Marx wished to 'socialize' and 'humanize' the heavy industry relations of production of Victorian capitalism. The challenge for today's Left is to transcend the Nineteenth century Marxist vision (and the Leninist Twentieth century vision), and to 'rework' the 'socialist' spirit into a form appropriate for the twenty-first century. This would present the contemporary Left with the challenge of coming to terms with the

superstructures, so as to attempt to 'socialize' and 'humanize' the MNC-Information Age' relations of production. The technology created by MNC gives us the possibility, as Habermas has noted, of a full participative democracy (based upon an electronically mediated 'public sphere'). Further, the technology of the Information Age contains the potential for building a producers' democracy based on (both white and blue collar) workers who have considerable individual autonomy. Meeting the superstructural challenge in this way might also assist in the formulation of a leftist challenge to the post-modern condition and the contemporary swing to the Right. The above view of socialism points to the possibility of even moving away from central planning, (whether of the 'capitalist'/MNC or 'state socialist' varieties), towards a producers-controlled 'socialist market'. MNC has created the possibilities for such a socialist democracy.

Any notion that the South African Left should ignore such 'First (or Northern) World' issues -- ie. a democracy constructed upon the latest (information) technology -- does a great disservice to South Africans. In fact, it is patronizing, since it implies that South Africans are not up to joining the 'modern' ('Northern') world, and should be kept in a state of 'Third (Southern) World' lesser-developedness.

## THE POST-MODERN ERA

In identifying the post-modern condition, Lyotard identified one of the most serious contemporary changes to socialism. The dramatic loss of influence over intellectuals (especially European intellectuals), particularly during the 1970s, significantly reduced the capacity of the Left to wage an effective struggle for hegemony in both the First

and Second Worlds. Lyotard described how, since the Second World War, the 'structuralist' knowledges -- which had come to dominate academic discourses since the end of the nineteenth century (what he refers to as 'grand narratives') -- have been in decline. The post-modern condition is intimately tied to the interrelated phenomena of a leftist theoretical/methodological malaise (one of the causes of the East European 'failure of nerve') together with the rise of laissez fareism in the First and Second Worlds. Significantly, Lyotard (1984:38-8) himself notes how the decline of the 'grand narratives' seems to have something to do with a growing social swing to the Right: that is a gradual loss of faith in state (communist) socialist systems together with the (related) growth in the popularity of 'free enterprise'. 'Truth', 'rationality' and 'reality' are discredited -- all concepts central to the Marxist dream. The Enlightenment project (which Habermas argues Marxism takes to its limits) is abandoned. In its place are the pragmatics of capitalist 'performance', or as Lyotard says, the new goal for post-modern knowledge ('language games') is "no longer truth but performativity" (1984: 46). Post-modernists delight in the deconstruction of grand narratives (like those of Hegelian philosophy, Marxism, liberal economics, etc) which are seen to be 'totalitarian' or 'fascist'. These are then replaced by a proliferation (anarchy?) of micro-narratives -- a sort of laissez faire of knowledge.

One of the 'grand narratives' that has been in serious crisis since the 1970s -- as its power of explanation has been increasingly challenged -- is Marxism (Pasquinelli in Hanninen & Paldan, 1984:24). Marxism's hegemonic influence over so much academic discourse in the 1960s had evaporated in the First and Second Worlds by the 1980s. Even within the South African academe of the early 1990s -- where Marxism

still constitutes a highly legitimate discourse -- post-modernist and post-structuralist discourses were making considerable inroads. It is somewhat ironic that it was a communist -- Louis Althusser -- who helped to give impetus, during the 1970s, to the shift within academe away from historical materialism, and towards post-modernism. It was Althusser's sophisticated attempts to deal with the crisis of Marxism -- and to theorize the French Communist Party's shift away from Stalinism towards Eurocommunism -- which inadvertently gave significant impetus to the deconstruction of Marxist-structuralism and hence to the subsequent rise of post-structuralism. The post-Althusserian deconstruction of Marxism, and later its Hegelian roots, unleashed the post-structuralist (and the related post-modernist) challenge upon the historical material paradigm, so intensifying the rapidity at which the Marxist dream collapsed. The post-Althusserian [10] debate subsequently progressed so far -- eg. Laclau and Mouffe (1985), and Hirst (1979) (also see Elliott, 1986) -- as to raise the question of whether socialists have to abandon historical materialism (and class) to deal with this (post-modern) era? It is no coincidence that the 'post-modern condition' was first 'identified' in 1979 by someone -- Lyotard -- working within the Francophone academic tradition (the Council of Quebec Universities). This was an academic tradition upon which Althusserian-Marxism had deeply impacted during the 1970s. Hence, for anyone attempting to come to terms with post-modernism and/or post-structuralism, the work of the Marxist 'discourse' group (especially the Althusserians) will be of interest.

What is remarkable is how, despite the enormous challenge posed to Marxism by the post-modern condition, those working within the

historical material paradigm have mostly been conspicuous by their inertia and conservatism in the face of the challenge posed. Except for Jurgen Habermas, Frederic Jameson and Jean Baudrillard, historical materialists generally failed to seriously concern themselves with these challenges (see Foster, 1983). It is through the work of Jameson and Baudrillard that the post-modern condition has influenced historical materialism. Jameson (1984) and Baudrillard (1975) attempted to marry important post-modern insights with Marxist ones, and in the process deflect Marxism into a direct concern with the superstructural age. But only Habermas (1987) challenged (from a Marxist perspective) post-modernist views, pointing out how they are inherently neo-conservative and anti-rationalist (and hence a threat to the Leftist project of 'rationalising'/humanizing the world).

Post-modernism is not a purely theoretical issue. From a New Leftist CCS perspective, it is, for example, interesting to note how this post-modern knowledge appears to complement the needs of multinational capitalism. MNC requires an open world economic system; a free interplay of resources within one unified market; a laissez faire approach. It is not coincidental that the unstructuredness of the post-modernist 'pure difference' reflects academic 'power relationships' that neatly match the anarchy of the market within MNC power relationships. In South Africa one sees a further parallel in the way that, just as South Africa is a peripheral sub-metropole of MNC, so too has post-modernist thinking entered South African academe in a way that matches this peripheral sub-metropole status. So, from a CCS perspective, it would seem that the post-modernists are not as 'unstructured' by their context as they might like to think; and their anarchistic approach is beneficial to MNC by its very weakening of any

coherent world view which could challenge MNC. The anti-rationalism of post modernist knowledge matches the anti-rationalism of MNC relations of production.

South Africa cannot be divorced from the 'post-modern condition'. Post-modernism -- as a symptom of the crisis of the structuralisms (in both its Monopoly capitalist and Marxist forms) -- may be of more immediate concern to those at the core of the MNC world hegemony (in Europe or America), where the crisis is currently most acute. However, for the South African Left the crisis of historical materialism cannot be relegated to a 'First World issue'. The crisis has direct bearing on local leftist praxis because: firstly, this crisis has, in part, manifested itself in the altered world power relationships of the 1990s (an alteration that directly impacts upon South Africa). Secondly, the 'collapse of the Marxist dream' is linked to the crisis of all the structural-knowledges (including historical materialism). That South Africa IS on the periphery of the MNC world-hegemony precisely means that it is are not immune from the effects of any crisis (of 'modernism' and of 'structuralism') taking place at the centre.

South Africa may be a peripheral player in the post-modern world, but it seems set to be a central player in the Leftist world of the 1990s. If the Left (including the South African left) is to find solutions to the leftist theoretical/methodological malaise (in the First World, Second World, and -- since South Africa is not an island, by extension -- the Third World), some engagement with post-structuralism and the 'discourse' approach is necessary. The most logical point of entry into this discourse could be the point of intersection between historical materialist-structuralism and post-

structuralism -- ie. the Althusserian turn towards discourse. In this regard CCS's flirtation with Althusserianism and post-Althusserianism becomes valuable as a point of entry for dealing with the crisis of structural-Marxism, and by extension, with post- modernism and the post-structural challenge to Marxism. This creates, for a South African-based CCS, the fascinating opportunity of examining the Althusserian and post-Althusserian approaches within a peripheral post-modernist context like South Africa. It is a context which, by virtue of its peripheralness, has been, and is, influenced by post-Althusserian and post-modern developments (despite the local leftist triumphs which help to blur the greater, world-wide, leftist crisis).

But if the post-modern era is one that has seen the serious weakening of grand narratives upon which the Left has relied, the post-modern era has also created superstructural 'gaps' available for exploitation by the Left. That these 'gaps' arise is not really surprising. After all, the post-modern condition appears to be tied to the rise of the (MNC) Information ('superstructural') Age in some way. Enzensberger identified these (superstructural) 'gaps' as the contradictions of this stage of capitalism. MNC has produced photocopiers, PCs, computer networking, satellites, videos, etc. These have all become central to the functioning of MNC. But they also constitute spaces for creatively challenging the system. An example would be sections of the South African alternative press (like the Weekly Mail) which have used both PC/desk-top publishing technology, together with a space opened up by the new laissez faire market.

Albeit that on a world-wide scale the Right is currently ascendant and the Left in crisis, this is no reason for the Left to adopt a Frankfurt School-type pessimism. There is no need for premature

defeatism when confronting the growing superstructuralism of the MNC world-network, and the related post-modernist (neo-conservative) 'anarchy'. Instead, a (redefined) Left could still adjust to the challenges of the superstructural and/or post-modern age and seek creative ways of leftist intervention -- a la Habermas or Enzensberger. Such an adjustment lies at the very heart of the CCS project.

## AN EMERGING WORLD CAPITALIST HEGEMONY

The collapse of Soviet power in 1989/1990 placed capitalism closer to being globally hegemonic than it had been since 1917. MNC, and its Information Age technology, penetrated deeply into regions previously excluded from the world capitalist hegemony. Elections in the Eastern European states, the USSR itself, in the newly united Germany, and Nicaragua, as well as the Chinese uprising, all served to confirm the general crisis of the Left. Only in South Africa and Chile can the left be regarded as having made any serious gains (in both instances due to mass popular discontent with the previous far-Right regimes). These might, however, turn out to be pyrrhic victories given the wider world context -- ie. the South African and Chilean Lefts will have little room for maneuver in this context. (In fact, a left currently elected on a 'socialist' platform, but then unable to deliver the goods -- may further weaken the 'socialist' position).

It is possible to see the leftist crisis as the product of a leftist failure to adapt. The Marxist, and later the Leninist-Marxist interpretations of socialism had gained a general hegemony within the Left by 1919. (A hegemony institutionalised by the Third International). This only became a problem after a remarkable conservatism and/or inertia transformed Marx's (and Lenin's)

revolutionary ideas into dogma ill-equipped to deal with its own methodological crisis, or with the Information/superstuctural Age, and/or with the post-modern condition. By the late 1960s it was becoming apparent (at least to the 'seed group' of what became the 'New Left') that significant sectors of the Left had been caught in a 'time warp'. The 1968 Paris Uprising highlighted this inertia -- the French Communist Party revealing its incapacity to deal with this event. The 1970s and 1980s served to confirm both the depth of historical materialism's methodological problems. A decline in the fortunes of the Leninist interpretation of historical materialism was the result.

The result was a <u>de facto</u> (First World) capitalist world hegemony in 1990. This MNC hegemony was made especially ironic given that First World-capitalism is far from healthy -- ie. the economies of the First World have never fully recovered from the 1970s recession which was triggered by the oil crisis (Beenstock, 1984). The 1980s, in fact, saw MNC in a state of on-going crisis with key capitalist players in Europe and North America facing enormous (and apparently irresolvable) problems such as growing unemployment, recession and a financial sector in trouble (see Beenstock, 1984; and Keman et al, 1987). The instability of the financial sector represents a deep-seated vulnerability within MNC because, with little prospect of the Third World debt being repaid, the crisis has seemingly been 'papering' over by a process of 'creative accountancy' rather than being solved. The financial sector crisis was most clearly revealed by the 1982ff International Banking Crisis and the 1989 USA Banking (Savings & Loan and Thrift) Crises. (A post-structural leftist might suggest that capitalism's crisis is derived from the same underlying -- structuralist -- problems that Leninist-Marxism failed to solve). What

is more, the influence of the New Right within MNC was considerable in 1990. This influence was tied to the fact that the 'New Right' seemed to have adapted to the post-modern condition and to the Information Age far more effectively than did the Left. There is some considerable irony in the fact that during the 1970s and 1980s self-styled 'conservatives' (like the British Conservative Party and the USA's Republican Party) manifested less inertia than supposed 'revolutionaries' within the Marxist-Leninist tradition. The New Right's emphasis on 'pragmatics', 'power' and its championing of an 'anarchy' of the 'market' neatly complements the underlying 'spirit' of post-modernism. The New Right both adapted to the new context, and helped to shape this new context, while the left paid a heavy price for its inertia.

Following the Soviet decline the world is being restructured along a 'North World'--'South World' cleavage; the former Comecon bloc seemingly set for integration into the 'North' (perhaps as part of an expanded EEC). In the immediate wake of the East European collapse, the USA became a one-power world hegemony. (A status confirmed by the USA's control of the United Nations in the 1990 USA-Iraq conflict). However, it seems likely that this single power hegemony will be a temporary phenomenon because of declining USA economic power. Also, the USA seems set to be challenged, at least in the medium term, by the two rising 'Northern' giants of a restructured (united) Europe, as well as Japan. (Japan may -- through exploiting the incorporation of Hong Kong into China -- succeed in integrating China into a Japanese hegemonic bloc).

What is of central concern to the Left in this restructuring process

is that all three potential world powers are PART of the SAME Information Age/MNC relations of production. Whether the 'North' is ultimately controlled by a single, double or triple power arrangement does not alter the fact that MNC is in control. Furthermore, the collapse of the Second World opened up these vast regions for the penetration ('colonization') of capital. The West German take-over of East Germany is the most obvious example of this. But the same process is apparent throughout Eastern Europe. This has come at a particularly opportune moment for MNC which was seemingly 'running out' of investment opportunities towards the end of the 1980s. Hence the opportunities offered by penetration of the Second World will be of tremendous benefit for MNC -- and will, in all likelihood, strengthen capitalism still further.

Within this new world relationship, Africa -- as part of the 'South' -- seems set to become a marginal comprador region of MNC. Where South Africa will fit into this is as yet unclear. Much will depend on how the South African left uses its local ascendancy, and deals with the flux (internationally and internally) of the first half of the 1990s. A key factor will be which sector (or alliance of sectors) of the local left come to power. (It is even possible that a ruling bloc will emerge out of an alliance of sectors of the local left and sectors of the local right). South Africa could, on the one hand, become an 'outpost' of the 'North' in Africa -- ie. an MNC sub-metropole (administering the rest of Africa for MNC). Alternatively, South Africa could opt to lose its MNC sub-metropole status, and so become fully a part of the 'South'. PAC and AZAPO -- following a Fanon (1968) path -- would presumably opt for the latter route.

There is much that militates in favour of the co-option of the South

African struggle into a sub-metropole relationship with MNC, namely: the enormous power of MNC in the contemporary world; the fact that the local (reformed) Right retains considerable power (and will push for integration in this direction); and because the socio-economic problems and dynamics work against any future ruling elite -- even leftist ruling elite -- being practically able to resist this course. For example, the South African working class is a de facto privileged group (a 'labour aristocracy') when juxtaposed to the lumpenproletariat and rural peasants. This presents the South African left with a dilemma -- who to represent in the ensuing (post-apartheid) social struggle. Increasingly, there are signs that the ANC (as one sector of the left) will come to represent an alliance of the working and the middle classes against the lumpenproletariat. Such an alliance would, of course represent a 'Bernstein route' -- ie. this left would represent the 'labour aristocracy' against a lumpenproletariat which would face increasing mass misery due to South Africa's position within MNC. A South African leftist ruling group adopting the Bernstein route would find itself: (a) in an automatic alliance with the social democrats of the 'North', and (b) 'acceptable' (if not 'loved') by MNC. (A Leninist route would, of course, opt for an alliance of the working class and lumpenproletariat. This would produce a South African-MNC conflict).

A new 'leftist' South African ruling elite seems set to be presented with two stark choices -- (1) an alliance with the labour of the 'North' (ie. social democrats) and being a de facto part of MNC relations of production (in a sub-metropole status), or (2) joining the 'South' in a hostile relationship to the 'North'. The 'Bernstein route' will probably be forced upon any new South African 'leftist'

ruling elite because: firstly, currently MNC/'Northern' power is so overwhelming; secondly, there is no longer a Second World to financially and militarily back an alternative route; thirdly, a new ruling elite would be unlikely to be in any position to meet the massive expectations of the lumpenproletariat. (To attempt to do so would incur the wrath of the MNC 'North' and/or lead to a mass exodus of desperately needed white skills). Failure to meet these expectations will produce social tension that will in all probability result in the ruling group using force. This will increase such a ruling group's reliance on the middle class and the 'North', so strengthening the pull of Bernstein route. Such a scenario would leave the 'far left' in opposition to the new (centre left) hegemony, probably aligned to the 'South'.

The role of the Marxism, historical materialism, etc has not played itself out yet in South Africa. However, amongst other factors, the legacy of the 'collapse of the Marxist dream' and the crisis of historical materialism are going to weigh heavily upon any South African left-leaning hegemony (and upon any left opposition they might have). The Left will have to address this negative legacy, and deal with the existing world power relationships (of the Information Age and a 'Northern' MNC-hegemony). This requires activating a new 'way forward' based upon a reappraisal and RECONSTRUCTION of leftist theory and practice. Such a reconstruction will undoubtedly prove to be a long process and will contain many constituent parts. This thesis is primarily aimed at raising questions around the issue of rethinking leftist praxis such that communication and the superstructures are given more attention than historical materialism has been want to

concede in the past.

FOOTNOTES

[1] The terms Left and Right date back to France's Estates-General just prior to the French Revolution. At this time those supporting the king and the traditional social order sat on the right of the Assembly, while opponents sat on the left. From this has derived the definition that "those on the 'left' wish to change things in the direction of more equality and less tradition than those on the right" (Robertson, 1985: 181). In contemporary political discourse, those on the Left would be seen to support, in one or other mix, the following positions: nationalization of industry; state control of the economy; a highly redistributive tax policy; pacificism or arms reduction; egalitarian policies in education; a preference for ecological rather than industrial expansionist policies; positive discrimination towards minority groups; etc. (Robertson, 1985: 181). Robertson's definition has the advantage of enabling the incorporation of a broad spectrum of political players into the category 'left'. In the case of South Africa such a broad category is advantageous because: firstly, in the course of the anti-apartheid struggle a wide diversity of players (including communists, socialists, some nationalists and even some liberals) came to adopt a 'more equality, less tradition'-type position. Only a broad definition can cope with the de facto diversity. Secondly, a broad definition of Left slides more easily into the democratic-leftist position I will argue for (ie. a position influenced by, amongst others, Habermas, Gramsci, and Eurocommunism).

For the purposes of this thesis, then, the following categorization can serve as a guide. At the time of the 1990 Reforms, the South African Left included a broad spectrum of organizational actors including the ANC, PAC, SACP, COSATU, UDF/MDM, AZAPO, NACTU, WOSA, the New Unity Movement (NEUM), Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (Idasa) and Five Freedoms Forum (FFF). The South African Right included those organizational actors who were part of, or allied to, the Tricameral system: the National Party (NP), Conservative Party (CP), Democratic Party (DP), Labour Party, Solidarity, National Peoples Party and the Inkatha Freedom Party. The Far Right would include: Afrikaner Weerstand Beweging (AWB) and Herstigte Nasionale Party (HNP). In 1990 the two largest actors were the ANC and NP: the ANC representing a centre-left position and the NP representing a centre-right position. In the course of restructuring South Africa into a post-apartheid society the above categorizations are likely to undergo a series of modifications.

[2] Stuart Hall (director of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) of the University of Birmingham from 1968 to 1979) described this 'collapse of the Marxist dream' as a central concern during the formative years of the Birmingham CCCS. (Interview with author on 20 September 1989, London). The unfolding saga of this 'collapse' has received attention elsewhere, examples being, Aronowitz (1981); Anderson (1983); Markovic (1982: ix-xvi); and

Kolakowski (1981: Vol.3).

[3] Hegemony refers to a complex process described by Gramsci. This term will be defined in Chapter 2, when Gramsci's work is examined.

[4] CCS is only one of many 'groups' that can be associated with the 'New Left' (a largely West European and North American phenomenon, being perhaps most characteristically associated with the 1968 French Uprising). The 'New Left' has not been a clear-cut position. One of the few coherences from which some sort of 'position' can be distilled is the New Left Review journal. The term 'New Left' has, since the 1960s, been claimed by a variety of groups who have been associated with the following sort of positions: (1) New Leftists have opposed the East European state-socialist model, Stalinists and the Communist Parties who advocated policies in line with the East European model. But (2) they simultaneously oppose the capitalist world-order, and (3) want to see this capitalist world-order overthrown by (4) organized revolutionary groups (throughout the world) utilizing whatever 'contradictions' are 'available' in their social contexts. In other words, (5) the (orthodox Marxist) view that one has to 'wait' for the 'right conditions' to launch a revolution is specifically rejected. (6) The Third World is seen to offer especially favourable conditions for revolutionary action aimed at weakening the overall capitalist world-order -- ie. national liberation struggles have been enthusiastically supported. (7) The working class is no longer seen to be a reliable revolutionary actor because the capitalist ruling classes have learned to co-opt and 'de-revolutionize' workers. The above positions -- re-arranged in various patterns -- have influenced a remarkably wide spectrum of leftist groups (frequently working in opposition to each other, and yet sharing the above underlying assumptions) including: anarchists, neo-Maoists, neo-Trotskyists, neo-Leninists, left-Greens, feminist and gay-rights groups, and certain social-democrat positions (eg. the Habermas-type). Kolakowski (1981, Vol 3: 492) has called this phenomenon a 'universalization' of 'Marxist ideology' and has suggested that it represents the 'disintegration' of Marxism.

[5] A rough categorization of what constituted the 'South African Left' in 1990 is given in footnote 1. Chapter 4 sketches out the way in which the South African Left came to encompass such a broad spectrum of players in the course of the struggle against apartheid, so that by the 1980s 'the struggle' had come to incorporate communists (including Leninists, Trotskyists, etc.), socialists, social-democrats, and even nationalists and some liberals. In terms of Robertson's (1985: 181) definition of Left, all these players (although presumably motivated by different interests) were guided by left-wing principles in the context of South Africa of the 1980s. Exactly which players will constitute Left and Right in the future is difficult to predict. Already, from the shake-down of political actors and constituencies set in motion by the February 1990 Reforms, it seems a series of shifts may be in the offing.

[6] The terms 'First World', 'Second World', and 'Third World' are used in this thesis despite the recognition of how problematic they are. The terms have their origin with a French 'New Left' journalist, Claude Bourdet, for whom the First World represented capitalism, the Second World represented Stalinist Communism, and the Third World represented a 'third way' (see Worsley, 1984: 307). This third way was opposed to First World 'capitalist imperialism' but was not pro-Stalinist. For Bourdet the 1950s and 1960s anti-colonial movements in Africa and Asia and the New Left both shared this 'third way' approach. The 1989 collapse of Eastern Europe to some extent problematizes these terms because the Second World has disappeared. The rapprochement between the former First and Second Worlds has now created a new world 'cleavage', namely 'North' and 'South' Worlds. The exact line of cleavage has yet to congeal, but some pattern is already becoming apparent. 'North'= former First World and parts of the Second World; and 'South' = former Third World and parts of the Second World. However, because this thesis deals with both the pre- and post- East European collapse Bourdet's journalistic terms remain valuable explanatory short-hand definitions for this thesis.

[7] It is possible that the reformed-NP may not be merely cynically 'co-opting' UDF/ANC discourse, but may rather be shifting its political position towards the Left in order to facilitate an ANC-NP ruling alliance after the first one-person-one-vote elections. This is but one of the possible shifts under way which would ultimately modify the categorizations of the South African Left and Right (given in footnote 1).

[8] This figure incorporates the weekly sales of: New Nation, UmAfrika, Weekly Mail, Vrye Weekblad, South, and New African.

[9] Marxism might have evolved in many directions. That Lenin was to have such an enormous impact on Marxist praxis has ultimately produced a remarkable irony for Marxism in the 1990s -- Lenin's interpretation (arising out of the Russian context) steered Marxism into a championing of the weakest and most disadvantaged sectors of world labour. This interpretation produced both a catastrophe and simultaneously an opportunity for Marxism in the 1990s. Championing the weak meant the USSR was dragged into an arms race with MNC which ultimately so damaged its experimental socialist economy that it was a major factor in precipitating the collapse of Second World Marxism (a collapse from which Marxism might conceivably never recover -- although, perhaps like Catholicism, Marxism may have sufficient resolve to weather its catastrophies). On the other hand, it is this very championing of the weakest and most disadvantaged sectors of MNC that created such an immense credibility for Marxism in so much of the Third World (where the weakest and most disadvantaged citizens of world capitalism now live). The contemporary support 'Marxism' enjoys amongst such a large percentage of South Africa's population is one example of the 'opportunity' created by the Leninist interpretation. So whereas Marx expected socialist revolutions to take place in the most developed nations, Marxism ironically generates inspiration in the least developed areas instead.

[10] The term 'post-Althusserian' does not in any way refer to a coherent 'school' of thinking. Neither does it refer to Althusserians who came after Althusser -- ie. those who used the 'Althusserian 'method'. Rather, it refers to the way in which Althusser's ideas impacted upon an intellectual debate that was much wider than Althusserians or even leftists. So 'post' refers to a 'period' following Althusser's intellectual intervention in which many intellectuals were influenced in one or other way by notions raised (often inadvertently) in his work. (This influence was often 'second-hand'. In other words, it need not have come from a direct engagement with Althusser/Althusserians. Instead, it may have arisen from engaging with the general academic discourse upon which his ideas had impacted). Althusser's work represented a highly imaginative attempt in the 1970s by a Marxist to deal with the methodological crisis of Marxism. But his 'solution' to this crisis proved to be no solution at all. In fact, his work seems instead to have accellerated the process of the collapse (deconstruction?) of the Marxist dream within the Francophone academic world (Anderson, 1983: Chapter 2). (This then filtered into Anglo-Saxon academic debates). But if Althusser failed to 'save' Marxism, he unintentionally opened up a whole new debate, and one that proliferated well beyond the Left. What his work on the superstructures, ISAs, ideology, anti-humanism etc. did was to enrich the debate about 'discourse'. For intellectuals this debate opened up a new way of understanding their own practices and for understanding academic discourse. Althusser (inadvertently) pushed a conceptual door slightly ajar. In the process he helped give rise to a 'scientific revolution' (Kuhn, 1974) once others poured through this now opened door. Once open, there was no stopping those who wanted to explore this new conceptual territory. This gave rise to an era of intense engagement with issues he had raised: the post-Althusserian era saw his (structuralist) work on discourse mutate into a post-structuralism (see Easthope, 1988), and his anti-humanist Marxism mutate into the anti-rationalist post-modernism. The parallel strands of post-structuralism and post-modernism occasionally intertwine, in particular in "postmodern literature [which] obediently falls into step with the motifs and preoccupations of institutionalized post-structuralist theory" (Conner, 1989: 128).

## Chapter 2. TOWARD A RECONSTRUCTED HISTORICAL MATERIALISM: HISTORICAL MATERIALISM, THE SUBJECTIVE AND COMMUNICATION

A central concern of this thesis is Leftist praxis within the Information Age. This Age that is the outcome of the pervasive penetration of information technology and its impact upon contemporary societies and their relations of production around the globe (see Porat, 1977; Beniger, 1986; and for a discussion of how information and telecommunications technology are merging, see Kaplan, 1990:14). Praxis in such an age requires an examination of the role -- both realized and potential -- of communication and the subjective within leftist struggle. The challenge of the contemporary era is to build a leftist hegemony within the context of the communicological opportunities offered by the Information Age -- ie. finding ways of realizing leftist aims (Robertson, 1985: 181). Writers like Toffler (1980) and Masuda (1980) hold the view that information technology is inherently progressive, and that this technology will automatically lead to a better and more democratic society. Writers in Slack & Fejes (1987) argue that this is not the case. While agreeing with the Slack & Fejes, I disagree that information technology is necessarily 'anti-progressive' (see, for example, Schiller, 1984). Rather, I argue that the task of the Left is precisely to engage in leftist work (praxis) to move society in a progressive, or leftist, direction by using and developing the possibilities available within the Information Age. (Following Korsch (1970), such leftist praxis will entail both theoretical and practical work).

A key problem, however, has been that historical MATERIALISM assumed hegemonic influence within leftist circles during the 20th Century. As a consequence leftist theory and practice generally

failed to pay adequate attention to the subjective and communication (ie. the superstructures) [1]. The major exceptions to this leftist 'blindspot' will constitute the basic material of Chapters 2 and 3. This shortfall became a serious liability for the Left from the mid-1950s as capitalism shifted from a primarily heavy industry base towards relations of production increasingly built on electronic information technology. With few exceptions exceptions -- like Herbert Schiller, Vincent Mosco, and Keyan Tomaselli -- few leftists engaged the electronic information society. And even the exceptions frequently devalued their relevance to a leftist communicology by moving too close to a conspiratorial understanding of the Information Age superstructures (see Schiller, 1973; 1984; Mosco & Herman, 1979; Murphy, 1983; and Tomaselli, 1988/89).

The shift within capitalism from the mid-1950s ushered in by the spread of electronic communication produced 'new' classes, changed the proportions of class-categories, altered the relationship between classes, and restructured the world's labour force. The failure of the Marxist-dominated Left to adapt to these changes was one factor that helped to precipitate the collapse of the Marxist dream in the First and Second Worlds at the end of the 1980s.

A question arises, how did the South African Left become ascendant when leftists in other parts of the world were in retreat? Part of the explanation lies in the peculiar historical material context found in South Africa of the 1980s and 1990s. However, part of the reason also lies in the de facto flexibility of the South African left, revealed in the building of a popular multi-class alliance (eg. the ANC-SACP alliance; plus the UDF and MDM) (see SACP, 1990: 33-40).

This popular alliance was built on extensive superstructural (ie. political) work, and was made possible by the SACP's two-stage theory of revolution (SACP, 1990:38). This theory amounted to an extraordinary revisionism, making possible multi-class leftist hegemony building. As a result, the South African revision laid the foundations for a possible success. But success requires that the Left continues to display flexibility and carry the democratic-alliance practices (learnt during the anti-apartheid counter-hegemonic stage of struggle) into the future (hegemonic stage). The Left is also placed in the envious position of having mass credibility, and being in a able to learn from the errors made by leftist hegemonies elsewhere. Further, South Africa is not yet fully integrated into the MNC Information Age. This gives the local Left the opportunity to adapt to the Information Age -- ie. instead of 'ignoring' the superstructures, the South African Left has the opportunity of building a 'socialized' Information society in which superstructural relations of production are imported, but modified so as to avoid MNC-exploitative relations of production. But achieving this requires a reconstruction of historical materialism such that the paradigm can cope more effectively with the superstructures, media communication and subjective (O'Sullivan et al, 1983: 231-233).

Such a reconstruction would be an application of the Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCS) concern with the "relationship between academic knowledges and political aspirations" (Johnson, 1986:277). CCS is primarily a 'site' in which to read context and politics into communication in order to develop a communicology with social transformative intent. British CCS was concerned with the Thatcherist threat to the Left and with seeking superstructural means to meet that

challenge. In South Africa a restructuring racial-capitalist state confronts the local Left. It is a state that has been forced to concede ground and/or negotiate with the Left. Communication has a central role to play in extracting the maximum from the negotiations and restructurings, and to build a local leftist-hegemony. This chapter will explore and examine the potential contribution that Marxist theoretical work on communication (the superstructures) can make with regard to a popular struggle based on multi-class alliances. This is of more than theoretical interest. For the millions of economically disadvantaged South Africans achieving success is a highly practical concern. In addition, a popular-alliance victory over the (anti-socialist) Right in South Africa offers a world-Left-in-crisis an opportunity to rebuild leftist theory and practice.

A major problem is that the Left -- dominated by a Marxist (historical materialist) interpretation of socialist praxis -- has generally not paid sufficient attention to how to use the superstructures (media, communication, etc) within its wider campaign for social change. This is ironic considering the NP's Beaufre-derived belief that the so-called 'communist onslaught' is centrally a 'psychological' and 'superstructural' war (see Frankel, 1984). The general lack of Marxism's concern with questions of communication is caused in part by the fact that it is precisely in the area of communication, media and the subjective that historical materialism has traditionally been theoretically weakest. It is an area that has been a sort of 'blind spot' (Smythe, 1977) in Marxism. This 'blind spot' tends to reproduce itself: because communication is so often 'backgrounded' by Marxists (both theoreticians and practitioners) it

has remained a (theoretically) underdeveloped and (practically) under-utilized area.

This blind spot needs to be addressed, especially in contemporary South Africa where communication studies tend to shore up dominant structures (Tomaselli, 1985). In other words, CCS should be concerned with the political and material implications of communication, and/or the communicative implications of political and economic structures in societies, as well as with developing the transformative possibilities of communication. However, a recuperation of the Marxist blind spot requires methodological re-working of the historical materialist paradigm; a process Habermas calls a 'reconstruction' of historical materialism (Habermas, 1979: chapters 3 & 4). In examining the theme of 'communication and counter-hegemony in South Africa', this thesis will examine how to reconstruct historical materialism such that communication and the subjective are accorded a more prominent role than has been 'traditional' within the realist paradigm (Wilson, 1983). There is no need to start with a blank sheet. Communication may have been backgrounded in 'mainstream' Marxism, but this is not to say that good work has not been done. On the contrary, some significant (and some flawed) theoretical work exists both internationally and locally. What is required is that the most useful of this work be brought more squarely into the heartland of Leftist analysis and practice. In this regard three (inter-related) challenges are posed to Leftist theorists in South Africa. These challenges are:

Firstly, the reconstruction of historical materialism (Habermas, 1979: chapters 3 & 4), such that the resultant 'reformulated' method is better able to deal with the 'subjective' and communication.

Habermas may (i) not have been the first leftist to consider the need to deal with the subjective, and (ii) certain of his formulations may be problematic when applied to South Africa (see Louw, 1982). However, his methodological challenge remains centrally significant for any attempt to build a leftist approach to communication.

To examine in depth all those leftists who have moved in the direction of a concern with the subjective/communication is beyond the scope of this thesis. A brief overview of scholars considered to have made the most important theoretical contribution to dealing with the subjective from an historical materialist perspective will be provided. It will be argued that Lukacs, the Frankfurt School, Gramsci, Korsch and Volosinov are especially important for the rationalist approach to be favoured in this thesis: ie. a 'totality' interpretation of the realist paradigm (Wilson, 1983) derived from Habermas.

A 'totality' interpretation need not necessarily be synonymous with the Hegelian idea of totality wherein 'totality' is a method for understanding 'truth' (where truth is equivalent to a dynamic whole). Habermas' theory of 'totality' does not claim access to a timeless (a-historical and abstract) truth. Totality takes from Hegel the idea of historicity and dynamism and looks for a structured process (reality) to 'uncover' (see Sayer 1979). Within this approach 'reality' is assumed to exist -- ie. it is an approach built upon a humanist/ rationalist interpretation of historical materialism. As such, it stands in contrast to the Althusserian structuralist, and/or post-Althusserian/post-structuralist approaches to the subjective/ communication. This totality interpretation reads reality as a

dialectical process in which subject and object meet (see Jay, 1984). Totality is a structured process (or whole) which governs the component parts of that process. It is an historically shifting dynamic process of interacting objective and subjective 'components'. I would propose that this 'subject-object' dialectical 'totality' provides the basis for a solidly historical materialist methodology in communication. Adopting this, rather than the Althusserian route has a number of implications for CCS (which has hitherto tended to draw on the anti-humanist position of the Althusserians (Bennett et al, 1981) rather than the humanism of the totality theorists. Unfortunately, if the 'general pattern' in this 'totality' work is to be distilled, each of the contributors will need to be dealt with in a rather sketchy way.

Secondly, there exists the need to develop, from within the historical material paradigm, the idea of active human agency. I will provide a brief overview of the work of culturalists (such as Raymond Williams and E.P. Thompson) -- whose ideas have been incorporated into CCS. Each has dealt with the notion of an active subaltern class 'resistance' culture. In the South African context the notion of a 'resistance culture' needs to be extended beyond any purely working class resistance to include other forms of resistance to the expansion of racial-capitalism in South Africa, eg. peasant, 'traditional-African', black petit-bourgeois (to apartheid), and even white (leftist) petit-bourgeois forms of resistance. Certainly, demographic trends have meant a central (and expanding) role for black working class resistance. However, other forms of resistance were, and are important. These need to be considered and structurally incorporated into an understanding of the local left-wing struggle. This too

requires a 'revision' and 'reconstruction' of historical materialism.

Thirdly, there is Enzensberger's challenge that "so far no Marxist media theory exists" (Enzensberger, 1974:96). Developing such a theory reguires that media 'gaps' be sought out and used. This third challenge (somewhat over-stated by Enzensberger) will, however, be the subject of the next chapter, when the notion of a 'subjective praxis' is specifically dealt with.

In dealing with the first two challenges this writer will, amongst other things, propose a shift in emphasis within CCS. I will move away from the Birmingham School formulation of drawing primarily upon: (i) the Althusserian structuralists, (ii) the culturalists, and (iii) Gramsci. This shift (or adaption) will be toward primarily: (i) a (dialectical) 'totality' approach to historical materialism; and (ii) the notion of an active human subject as found in the work of the culturalists, the Birmingham School and the CCS in South Africa.

## Historical materialism's earliest concerns with communication

Epistemologically, the historical materialist attempt to deal with the 'subjective' and communication can be traced back to Marx and Engel's German Ideology, wherein the 'base-superstructure' formulation was enunciated (Marx & Engels, 1974: 47). This text, however, has lent itself to an economistically reductionistic interpretation of communication in which the (economic) base is seen to determine the superstructures. Engels maintained that Marx never intended such a determinist understanding of the superstructures (Marx & Engels, 1978: 760). None-the-less, because Marxists have tended to treat the subjective/consciousness/communication as peripheral to their central concern with political-economy, a reductionism crept in. There has

been, in a sense, a 'dismissal' of the non-material as secondary and derivative. The failure to deal coherently with the superstructures led to a lack of comprehension concerning the depth of the shift within capitalism towards a 'superstructural' (Information) mode of production (ie. one of the reasons Comecon was 'left behind').

Because it has lent itself to a reductionism, The German Ideology cannot consequently be considered the best text upon which to build a rigorous leftist communication theory. Marx's work dealing with 'the subject' -- such as the 1844 Manuscripts -- is more useful in this regard. However, the most important Marxist attempts to deal with the 'non-material' non-reductively came after the collapse of the Second International. Thereafter, 'subjective' phenomena -- such as nationalism and the growing impact of the mass media, as well as the 'objective' failure of the 1929 economic crisis to bring about a European/American revolution -- directed attention to the weaknesses of an overly materialist interpretation of Marxism. Out of this emerged a pool of Marxist work which 'reconstructed' historical materialism such that materialist reductionism is transcended, but without materialism being replaced by a subjectivism. Examples of this are the work by Lukacs, the Frankfurt School, Volosinov and Gramsci. This corpus of work deals with the difficult (for Marxists) interface of subject and object. It provides a solid basis for the construction of a Marxist approach to communication. What makes this work so valuable is its methodological moves away from 'economism' towards 'totality' (Jay, 1984). It offers the conceptual framework within which the South African Left can deal with the subject-object (race-class) interface -- ie. issues such as race, communication,

voluntarism, etc. within the context of a capitalist ordering of society. This is helpful in addressing the issue of organizing a popularist (rather than workerist) struggle. An orthodox economist Marxism would be hard pressed to address such a complex totality.

Dealing at some length with the 'totality approach' to communication is particularly important to offer a counter-weight to the 'discourse approach' (ie. the Francophone Althusserian structuralist interpretation), which gained widespread currency in South Africa during the 1970s (Muller and Tomaselli, 1990). This latter interpretation is anti-rationalist, and tends towards a subjectivism and an intellectualizing passivity. This represents a cul-de-sac for the Left which is inappropriate in the a context where a facilitation of praxis is required. Although the early 'totality Marxist' work (eg. Lukacs and the Frankfurt School) is also overly intellectual and passive, it does not necessarily have to lead into a cul-de-sac. Rather, as the work of Benjamin, Marcuse, Habermas and Enzensberger demonstrates, the totality interpretation offers scope for praxis in which both the subjective and objective have a part to play. It is hence work that is potentially valuable for those seeking to build South Africa's left-wing media.

The next section will seek to briefly sketch the epistemology of the most significant moves within historical materialism to develop theoretically the subject-object 'totality' theme. (This notion of totality is important because it offers a non-reductionistic way of dealing with communication and the 'subjective' **from a perspective which continues to give considerable weight to the material dimension**). This concern with theory is of more than an academic interest: with the rapid proliferation of progressive-alternative

media in South Africa the time has come for those engaged in leftist communication to develop greater theoretical 'awareness' of the epistemological roots and 'possibilities'; greater rigour; and greater self-reflexivity. Questions need to be asked (and answered) from a leftist perspective about issues like the roles of the superstructures, theory, white petit-bourgeois intellectuals (academics, teachers, computer programmers, journalists and other information workers); the role of the media; and ways of dealing with the impact of the Information Age upon South Africa.

Lukacs' dialectical totality approach

In retrospect, Lukacs's theoretical work in the 1920s (strongly condemned by the Third International at the time), represents a crucial early alarm bell and/or recognition (by a Marxist) of historical materialism's methodological shortcomings. More importantly Lukacs' work represented an extraordinarily sophisticated attempt to reformulate historical materialism. Hence, it is little wonder that the New Left has so often turned to Lukacs.

Lukacs' work on dialectical totality represents a methodological key for the reconstruction of historical materialism away from both economism (eg. deterministic materialism) and subjectivism (eg. Althusserianism). His History and Class Consciousness (1971) is the first historical materialist approach to ideology which attempted to formulate a rigorous methodological move beyond reductionistic economism. History and Class Consciousness was first published in 1923. This is the seminal text from which an historical materialist 'totality' concern with the 'subjective' and 'communication' has sprung. It is a text that has received insufficient attention from

South African leftists concerned with communication/ media. The more South Africa is integrated into the Information Age the more important Lukacs' ideas will become.

Lukacs' rigorous adherence to Marxist humanism and rationality (as evidenced in Marx's 1844 Manuscripts) stands in stark contrast to Althusserian structuralism (wherein historical materialist rationality is abandoned). Althusserianism has been very influential in South African progressive communication/media analysis. Despite other differences, Lukacs shares one similarity with Althusser, namely a tendency toward passive intellectualizing/theorizing. However, Lukacs can in part be excused this 'fault' because he was an early pioneer of this work within historical materialism. Althusser' work came much later -- when the issue of the theory-practice relationship was more developed within the realist paradigm (see Habermas, 1974a; Markovic & Petrovic, 1979).

The key text underpinning moves toward 'reconstruction' is:

> Let us assume for the sake of argument that recent research had disproved once and for all every one of Marx's individual theses. Even if this were to be proved, every serious 'orthodox' Marxist would still be able to accept all such modern findings without reservation and hence dismiss all of Marx's theses in toto -- without having to renounce his orthodoxy for a single moment. Orthodox Marxism, therefore, does not imply the uncritical acceptance of the results of Marx's investigations. It is not the 'belief' in this or that thesis, nor the exegesis of a 'sacred book'. On the contrary, orthodoxy refers exclusively to method. (Lukacs, 1971:1).

For Lukacs (1971:2 that method was an Hegelian (dialectical) interpretation of historical materialism, wherein "the materialist dialectic is a revolutionary dialectic". The dialectic was a social (i.e. human, rather than natural) process in which contradictory social relationships (within capitalism) drove history in a certain

direction (toward 'rationality'= socialism). In this respect Lukacs differed from both Korsch and Engels who did not separate 'nature' and 'humans'. The important point about Lukacs' homocentric understanding of the dialectical process is that he understood 'socialness' as both material and subjective. This totality of subject and object represented a complex whole or process (Meszaros, 1972). This is an understanding which opens the way for a 'totality' Marxism in which communication, ideology and the 'subjective' require as much concern as do economics and the 'material'.

Lukacs was attempting to move Marxism in the same direction that Althusser would attempt later from an anti-rationalist 'discourse' position. However, unlike Althusser, Lukacs recognized that to work (as a Marxist) with the subjective required retaining the centrality of 'objective reality' and theoretically working out the relationship between the objective (material) and subjective. (Hence, Lukacs refuses to grant any 'autonomy' to the 'superstructures' and/or 'discourse' in the way Althusser did). Lukacs came to conclusions strikingly similar to the early humanism of Marx's own 1844 Manuscripts (only published in 1932; or nine years after Lukacs' History and Class Consciousness was published). Hence Lukacs laid the theoretical foundations for an approach to the superstructures that derives from a rational humanist interpretation of historical materialism. This interpretation that re-emerged strongly in Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action (1984) which represents a significant contemporary 'defence' of historical materialism from the (post-modern) challenge to the realist paradigm's core assumptions. (This Habermasian concern is derivative of the Frankfurt School's work in developing Lukacs' totality theory on ideology in a much more

'concrete' fashion -- ie. when they analyzed the superstructures as concrete 'ideology-producing machinery').

If in Western Europe the totality approach proved useful in theoretically 'defending' historical materialism from the post-modernists and post structuralists, in South Africa it has a more 'practical' value. (It should be noted that within South Africa post-modernist debates over whether reality exists or not frequently illicit a hostile response from those who daily experience the REALITY of apartheid -- i.e. esoteric theorizing in the face of such a reality is seen to be inappropriate to the context). Such a 'totality' approach is especially important for the Left because -- to state the obvious -- changing apartheid society will require methods different to those formulated by Marx for use in late 19th Century Europe. Challenging capitalism (as material reality) alone is not sufficient in South Africa. The South African 'struggle' requires the sort of theoretical 'openess' to 'subjective' possibilities as posited by Lukacs if it is to be successful. In fact, I would propose 'distilling' the historical materialist method down even further than Lukacs proposed, such that his reliance on the working class alone to drive the dialectic is replaced by a notion of a Leftist 'alliance-driven' dialectical struggle (ie. the working class will be seen as only one part of 'the struggle' -- a proposition that may have horrified Lukacs). The South African struggle demands more than an orthodox materialist concern about the capitalist base. It also requires the mobilization of the superstructures (journalism, teachers, academics, ideology, symbols, media, theory, etc.) if apartheid superstructures are to be challenged (even in a supposedly

'post-apartheid' South Africa). Lukacs' theory offers a formulation whereby moving in the direction of, for example, establishing progressive-alternative media ventures and 'cultural projects', can be justified from within historical materialist premises, but in a way which understands the relationship between such superstructural activities and material conditions. This is of practical significance -- it offers historical materialists the possibility of a methodologically 'rigorous' approach to leftist media and cultural work.

This thesis, following Lukacs' logic, seeks within South African conditions a New Leftist approach to superstructural (media, culture, etc) work. In this regard it represents an adaption -- in the South African context -- of Marx's original project to find structural agents of social change. In Victorian-capitalist England Marx correctly identified the most likely structural agent of change to be the emerging proletariat. For Marx, the proletariat was capitalism's contradiction. As Lukacs points out, to assume that the details of Marx's analyses can be applied carte blanche to all societies (for example South Africa) a-historically is to abandon the historical material method, in favour of a theoretical orthodoxy. Economism is such an orthodoxy -- one that threatens to 'blind' the Left to the possibility of non-economic (eg. communicative) contradictions. In the Information Age the Left need to be open to the possibility that white collar information workers (intellectuals, teachers, computer programmers, journalists, etc) may be excellent structural agents of change -- as good as, or in some contexts possibly even better than, the working class.

It was a reaction against economistic Marxism that produced the

return to Hegelian dialectics: economism was challenged by Lukacs, Korsch, the Frankfurt School, Gramsci and later the New Left. Theirs was an attempt to rescue historical materialism from reductionism by an insistence that the notion of dialectical (Hegelian) totality underpinned Marx's method. Economism is reductionistic because the economic base (the objective) represents only one part of the total dialectic. Hence, one finds in the work of Lukacs, Korsch, the Frankfurt School and Gramsci a concern with the non-material (ie. superstructural/subjective) 'processes' within totality; while Marx's concern with the economic base (objective) is not abandoned. Hence, the need arises to develop an understanding of the relationship(s) between subject and object within the 'total' process (ie. whether subject and object are 'contradictory' or 'complementary'). Such a formulation opens up the prospect of helping to build a leftist hegemony through, for example, superstructural (communication, ideological and media) intervention. This is in addition to the 'traditional' workerist (eg. trade union) approach of exploiting economic contradictions. More importantly, a theoretical framework is provided through which to formulate the integration of superstructural (eg. culture, information, media) and 'materialist' (eg. Unionist) work. Within such a framework, media, information, communication and cultural work can be more centrally integrated into the struggle to build a leftist hegemony. The 'Natal Workers Theatre Movement' and the 'Culture and Working Life Project' in Durban is one example of a practically (rather than theoretically) oriented 'feeling out' of the way forward in this area (see Von Kotze, 1988).

Given that Lukacs was a theoretical pioneer (indeed, arguably, the

methodological pioneer) in moving beyond economism, while remaining within the historical material paradigm, it is hardly surprising that Lukacs should also be in the forefront of developing a revised Marxist notion of ideology. Lukacs turned to 'ideology' because of a European concern, between the World Wars, at the apparent quelling of the European working class as a source of revolution (ie. a concern shared by the Frankfurt School and Gramsci). With the ascendancy of the South African left, grounded upon a solid working class base, Lukacs' concern may appear to be of little relevance in South Africa of the 1980s and 1990s. However, given the likelihood of the struggle ending in significant (negotiated) compromises with the Right, together with the collapse of Soviet power, co-option by the Right is still a distinct possibility. One of the dangers of the popularist alliance is that the likelihood of sections of the alliance being co-opted into a comprador relationship with MNC is increased. Because of this the South African left may still face the same processes of ideological manipulation and the co-option as have manifested themselves in Europe/America. That MNC dominates the Information network only serves to increase this likelihood. Hence, it is too early to assume that South Africans can write off the work of those who have dealt with the failure of the working class as revolutionary agents, and of the ideological manipulation of this class.

This is not to say Lukacs' work is flawless. There are problems, like: (a) his 'concretizing' of theory into 'bourgeois' versus 'proletarian' thought; and (b) his reifying and absolutizing of the totality concept. Lukacs made the error of referring to dialectical totality as if it were a concrete mechanism, instead of using the notion as a heuristic tool to understand a complex process. It is in

these areas that Gramsci can be used as an excellent corrective for the problems in Lukacs' work. Gramsci's analysis operates within the same totality framework as Lukacs'. However, Gramsci's work on hegemony and on intellectuals (because it is more concretized within real problems in the Italian context) is less theoretically generalized than Lukacs'.

Despite the problems, however, for leftists seeking an 'application' of the Marxist (realist) method to the superstructures, Lukacs remains an obvious starting point for developing a rigorously historical materialist concern with the phenomena of communication and the subjective. Lukacs does not violate the underlying premises of the realist method (Wilson, 1983) in his attempt to expand this method into a concern with the subjective. According to Sayer (1979) the realist method involves a process of working from the phenomenal to the essential. Reality (phenomena) is assumed to exist (i.e. the assumption which Althusser, and the subsequent post-structuralists -- as anti-humanists and anti-rationalists -- have sought to deny and deconstruct). Marx, as a realist, sought to identify phenomena and phenomenal "clusters" and then name them. Then the phenomenal clusters are explained by the positing of those 'mechanics' beneath the 'surface reality' that can explain the phenomenal clusters identified. 'Reality' is taken to be the visible phenomena plus the hidden essence. It was these assumptions and premises, and this notion of reality, and its distortion (ie. ideology as 'false consciousness'), that Lukacs accepted and developed. From the Althusserian, post-structuralist and post-modernist (anti-rationalist) perspectives these premises would be rejected. However, this thesis

instead proposes to follow Habermas' lead (and his rationalist challenge to post-structuralism). At root then, it is as a consequence of adopting Lukacs' realist premises that the Frankfurt School, Gramsci, Korsch, Volosinov and Habermas are foregrounded within this thesis' proposed approach to communication. An alternative would be the 'discourse' route.

In the move to examine the 'non-material' from a realist perspective, Lukacs developed two particularly valuable concepts for historical materialists concerned with the superstructures and ideology. These are 'reification' and 'fetish'.

Although the notion of fetish begins in Marx's work -- ie. Marx's discussion of commodity fetishism (Marx, 1974: 43-58) -- it was Lukacs' totality interpretation of Marx that really drew attention to it. Lukacs' interpretation of historical materialism drew out the humanistic side of Marxism and hence developed the relationship between alienation and reification. (Lukacs did this before the publication of Marx's own work in his area -- see Marx, 1981: 61- 74). However, it should be noted that it was another theorist using the totality approach, namely the Frankfurt School member Herbert Marcuse (1955:273-287), who first explicitly drew attention to the importance of the notion of 'alienation' within Marxism.

For Lukacs, reification was the social outcome of the 'loss' of totality. (Lukacs, 1971:83-109). Once the subject-object totality was 'split', the path was cleared for the objectification (reification) of people: henceforth people (subjects) could be treated as 'things' or 'commodities' (objects). This objectification of people was what lay at the heart of Lukacs' critique of capitalism which is neither exclusively materialist nor subjective -- it harnesses an

understanding of the totality (subject and object) of capital as a process. If a concrete example is sought, to illustrate Lukacs' theory, one need look no further than South Africa where racial-capitalism's handling of black people offers a particularly striking example of such a process of objectification -- the reduction of human subjects to (materialist) units of production.

The notion of reification/alienation is potentially valuable to a South African Contemporary Cultural Studies in two ways. Firstly, it offers a realist route into understanding white thinking which simply equates blacks with labour units. In other words, Lukacs' method offers a valuable tool for the analysis of the ideology of apartheid from within the realist paradigm; and concomitantly offers a valuable tool for analysis of the media serving the South African white sector. (However, when analyzing this white sector it would seem useful to link Lukacs' work to the Frankfurt School's totality work on authoritarian personalities and fascism (Adorno et al, 1982). This latter work neatly complements the totality approach to reification). The understanding generated from this would be practically useful for those programmes aimed at changing white thinking (especially in a post-apartheid society).

Secondly, it offers a way to understand black worker alienation -- ie. the alienation (in totality terms) that springs from both economic exploitation and racial suppression. Such an understanding would be practically useful in progressive-alternative media work that aimed at mobilizing the black working class sector. (In this area Black Consciousness (populism) -- and BC media -- has been far advanced in comparison to workerist and popularist approaches).

For Lukacs, fetishization occurs when reification (objectification), which is socially derived, is made to look natural. This is the basis of his theory of ideology. In this formulation, Lukacs, of course, is merely developing the realist paradigm's assumption that 'reality' exists and applying this to the development of a theory of ideology as 'false consciousness'. It is, however, a formulation more sophisticated than the economistic base-superstructure argument. Lukacs' humanistic notion of ideology and the superstructures offers an useful theoretical underpinning for Gramsci's more practically-orientated work on the superstructural 'trenches' built by the bourgeoisie to defend capitalism. In South Africa, racial-capitalism (apartheid) has not succeeded in 'naturalizing' apartheid social relations. However, a negotiated abandoning of apartheid may well produce significant compromises to the Right, such that de-racialised capitalism (dominated by an indigenous black bourgeoisie) replaces the apartheid dispensation. The Left will need to be vigilant that in any post-apartheid era such a fetishization of a de-racialised capitalism is avoided.

For the proposed reconstruction of historical materialism, the important thing about Lukacs' concept of 'fetish' is that it sees 'ideology' as derived from the breaking of totality. If 'totality' is 'lost' it results in either 'objectivism' or 'subjectivism'. Both subjectivism and objectivism are examples of fetishized thinking from a totality perspective. Applying this logic one arrives at the following formulations:

(a) one cannot understand the superstructures/communication outside of an understanding of economic conditions. It is this sort of de-contextualized analysis that many idealist interpretations

(eg. phenomenologists, hermeneuticians and post-structuralists) undertake when they try and understand ideology, 'culture', communication and the media as if these were 'free floating' phenomena. Such subjectivisms are excellent examples of what Lukacs would have called "fetishized" thinking. From an historical materialist perspective these are 'idealisms', criticized at length by Marx (Marx & Engels, 1980). A 'totality' historical materialism does not deny the existence, or even the importance of ideas (and/or the subjective) in human affairs, but does deny that ideas/the subjective should be granted primacy in explaining human affairs. CCS, because of the 'superstructural' nature of its terrain of study, is continually in danger of drifting into such an idealism (a sort of Left-Hegelianism -- see McLellan, 1978). The great merit of incorporating Lukacs' understanding of the superstructures into CCS is that it will foreclose the possibility of a drift in such a direction. It also curtails moves into post-structuralisms, deconstructionism and post-modernisms (which grew out of the Althusserian 'discourse' project); or

(b) 'collapsing' the subject and object together such that the subjective is merely (an unproblematic) derivative of the objective (base) is also inadequate. This is how orthodox (vulgar) Marxists approach communication and cultural studies (see de la Haye, 1980; and Schiller, 1973). Such an objectivist approach -- ie. where the (objective) base is seen to determine the (subjective) superstructure -- is no less fetishized because it too reifies (in this case objectifies) people (subjects).

This latter problematic is one Lukacs did not himself examine. However, the Frankfurt School (and especially Habermas) examined this area -- hence the proposal in this thesis that this School be incorporated into CCS.

In this Lukacsian principle lies a key to this thesis's 'reconstructed historical materialist' approach to communication, culture etc. A CCS based on a totality interpretation of historical materialism would see as one of its tasks, a theoretically-derived New Leftist intervention within the dynamics of 'the struggle'. This would be necessary to point out the dangers of conceiving of the struggle against racial-capitalism in either exclusively economic terms, or exclusively subjectivist terms. Both of these are forms of fetishized or ideological thinking. The former approach (economism or workerism), would fail to address the problem or racism, nationalism and ethnicity in South Africa. (Failure to address the problem does not make it disappear, as Eastern Europe has demonstrated). The latter approach (eg. idealism, such as liberalism) would fail to address the problem of economic exploitation. This issue is consequently of more than mere theoretical concern.

If communication and culture have a role to play in the construction of a leftist hegemony in South Africa, then the Lukacsian subject-object dialectic is central to this role in two respects: (1) apartheid has been both 'material' and 'subjective'. Leftists wishing to build hegemony will need to deal with both of these; (2) fighting apartheid requires a 'totality' campaign -- ie. work at both a 'subjective' (communication) level and 'objective' (economic) level. What is being proposed is a reading of Lukacs into Gramsci in order to arrive at the notion of hegemonic work that operates in a multi-

dimensional fashion. Such hegemonic work would avoid both: a purely 'objectivist' (ie. workerist) campaign working only with 'encouraging' economic contradictions; and a purely 'subjectivist' campaign which seeks to affect change only through the superstructures (ie. ignores the role of economic contradictions).

Because of the theoretical nature of his writing, Lukacs is difficult to operationalize in terms of practical situations. For this reason, practitioners overlook his importance. Lukacs is important because he raises some seminal questions and creates problems that are seen to be centrally implicated in the development of a reconstructed historical materialism. These questions have significant implications for the struggle, especially a leftist struggle confronting the challenges of the MNC Information Age.

## The Frankfurt School: pioneers of leftist superstructural analysis

The Frankfurt School theorists [2] are central players in the debate over leftist praxis. The struggle for hegemony over the Left has a long history (see Kolakowski, 1981 (Vol 1): chapters X and XI). Marx's interpretation of leftist praxis became dominant as a consequence of his winning a series of intellectual battles within the (London based) International Working Men's Association (IWMA). Three main positions were in competition -- those of Karl Marx, the Proudhonists (followers of Pierre Proudon) and Michael Bakunin. Marx defeated the Proudhonists during the 1860s. He won the intellectual battle with Bakunin in 1872. Thereafter, Marxism became dominant within the Left, being institutionalized as such during the Second International. No sooner was the Marx-Bakunin struggle over, than a new struggle emerged amongst Marxists themselves -- between Vladimir Lenin and Eduard Bernstein (see

Kolakowski, 1981 (Vol 2): chapter IV). The Leninists won: after 1917 Marxist-Leninists controlled the USSR and were in de facto control of the rest of the world's Left via the Third International (1919-43). The Frankfurt School arose during this period as a challenge to Leninism. The School represented a radical-leftist anti-Bolshevik interpretation of Marxism that was hostile to both capitalism and Soviet state socialism. Not surprisingly then, the Frankfurt School greatly influenced the New Left during the 1960s. The 1980s collapse of Eastern Europe increases the importance of the Frankfurt School for New Leftists attempting to rebuild the Left in the wake of the damage wrought by the failures of 'state socialism'.

The Frankfurt School represents an early warning signal for the left concerning the collapse of the Marxist dream because of its failure to deal adequately with the subjective and superstructures. The School's work on the "culture industry" was an extraordinarily early (leftist) recognition of the new direction capitalism was taking -- towards the growing centrality of the superstructures within capitalist relations of production. The School recognized the trend towards 'superstructuralization' during the 1930s-1940s, while it was still in its infancy. Only in the 1960s did the full extent of the superstructuralization of capitalism become obvious.

Given CCS's extensive work on media (Hall et al, 1980) from a New Leftist position (see Bennett, et al, 1981), it is surprising how little attention the Frankfurt School has received from CCS. This is more surprising when the School's central concern with 'context', 'politics' and superstructure is noted. Because of these concerns the School could rightly be termed the early pioneer of the approach that was subsequently called CCS (Punter,1986). Part of the explanation for

this neglect may lie in the fact that CCS, as an initially British New Leftist school, shares the Anglo-Saxon (empiricist) 'unease' with the Germanic philosophical bent so central to the Frankfurt School's work.

The Frankfurt School is significant because, like Lukacs, these theorists were continually conscious of the methodological problems of working in the area of the subjective/ superstructure from within historical materialism. This is highly significant for any New Leftist attempt to confront the (superstructural) Information Age. It makes the School's work valuable to CCS -- since it offers CCS not only a body of insights and concepts vis-a-vis the media; but also offers a method able to deal with the subjective/superstructures with an in-built check against 'slippage' into either idealism and/or superstructuralism (Harland, 1987); or reductionistic materialism (economism). The Frankfurt School, like Lukacs, saw the 'solution' to historical materialism's difficulty in dealing with the subjective lying within a 'totality' interpretation of the realist paradigm. This was a pattern established by Horkheimer (see Horkheimer, 1972: 10-46), the director of the School from 1931 to 1958. Hence, when extracting a method out of the School's work, from Horkheimer right through to Habermas, one finds a similarity to Lukacs' totality method. But whereas Lukacs dealt with the subject-object interface theoretically, the Frankfurt School developed their theory of this interface more 'concretely' -- through an examination of the media and aesthetics (the 'culture industry') and of authority and Nazism. In fact, at times their work became 'empirical', partly as a result of their exposure to Anglo-Saxon empiricism in the USA. Further, the School and its contemporary successors were always concerned with how this theory could be used

practically to engage with social problems in a 'rational praxis' (see Marcuse, 1968; Bloch et al, 1980; and Habermas, 1980; and especially Horkheimer, 1972: 26; and Habermas, 1974a: 253). It is this practically-oriented aspect of their totality approach that makes their work especially appealing for integration into a South African media and cultural praxis. The School offers South African leftists a means of conceptualizing a rationalist praxis in which both objective (eg. capital) contradictions and subjective (eg. ideological, media, racist) contradictions are exploited as change agents.

For the purposes and scope of this thesis it is not necessary to deal with the entire Frankfurt School. The School was large -- both in terms of numbers and output -- i.e. Jay identifies 28 members between 1923 and 1950 alone (Jay, 1973: 356 - 364), and there were major differences in interpretation between different members. Hence, referring to the Frankfurt School as if it were a coherent 'unity' is problematic, because:

(a) There is some difficulty in identifying exactly who should be considered a member of the 'school'. There are, for example, certain key differences between Benjamin and others in the School. However, Jay (1973) and Held (1980) will be accepted as having 'defined' who constituted the School: the most important 'members' will be taken to be - Horkheimer, Adorno, Benjamin, Marcuse and Habermas);

(b) It is difficult to decide when the school 'ended'. Should we include Marcuse's later work and do we include Habermas? For the purposes of this thesis both Marcuse and Habermas will be considered as 'part' of the Frankfurt School due to the fact that in their analysis of the 'culture industry'/ideology they essentially use the totality approach originally developed by Adorno and Horkheimer.

(c) There is a problem with finding a 'coherence' to a Frankfurt School 'theory'. In fact, even the most important 'members' of the 'school' changed their theoretical perceptions over time. Hence Adorno, for example, eventually rejected the idea of totality (fearing that 'totality' was an 'illusion'). Instead, he opted for the idea of 'fragmentation': Adorno's Minima Moralia (1978), for example, represents an explicit turn to presenting only disjointed, broken, momentary pictures, with a conscious avoidance of any attempt to create 'totality' out of these bits. (This 'method' has certain similarities to Benjamin's ideas on hermeneutics). It is Adorno's later pessimistic work -- when he even moved to a position of virtually denying the possibility of knowledge in a post-Auschwitz world (Adorno, 1973: 361-362) -- which can be regarded as being largely to blame for much Marxist criticism of the School. Adorno's later work (which is not unlike post-modernism in its pessimism and theoreticism) has been mistakenly equated with the Frankfurt School per se; hence the widely held leftist perception that the School was pessimistic, and overly-theorist (ie. anti-praxis). (See Chasin & Chasin, 1974). However, if Adorno's later work is seen instead as the 'wrong turn' of only one member of the Frankfurt School in his later life, then leftist negativity toward the Frankfurt School as a whole becomes unnecessary. In fact, if one emphasizes instead the Benjamin-Marcuse-Habermas (praxis-oriented) interpretation of the Frankfurt School's dialectical method then the oft heard Marxist criticism of the School is to a large extent, made redundant.

Summarizing the main lines of argument of Horkheimer, Adorno, Benjamin, Marcuse and Habermas can do justice to none of them. However, such an overview can serve to give a 'feel' of the Frankfurt

School, and of shifts in emphasis between the main members. For this reason a simplified precis of these five theorists proceeds an examination of the School as a whole, and its value for a CCS examination of communication, culture and the media.

* MAX HORKHEIMER, as director of the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt (i.e. the Frankfurt School) from 1931 to 1958, exerted a decisive influence in the direction taken by the School: ie. a totality interpretation of the realist paradigm (see Horkheimer, 1972:10-46). Horkheimer saw the totality method as an antidote to the reductionism of economistic Marxism and as a way to transcend the divide between philosophy and empiricism. In formulating these ideas he drew upon both Korsch and Lukacs, although he (and the rest of the School) rejected Lukacs' optimistic Marxist holism (of the working class representing the identical subject-object of history). He set the School's pattern of opposition to liberal-bourgeois 'reason' (see Horkheimer, 1978: 26-48), particularly as manifested in positivist empiricism. The form this opposition took placed Horkheimer and the School within the realist paradigm -- central to his work was a notion of ideology, derived from Marx's work on commodity fetishism. His 'critical theory' is centrally concerned with exposing the system of (subjective) 'illusion' which became institutionalized in the form of the 'culture industry'. Yet while working within the realist paradigm, Horkheimer simultaneously rejected the Marxism of the Third International and Stalin as a satisfactory alternative to capitalism (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1982: 211-215). Horkheimer rejected the 'instrumental reason' and/or 'cult' of technocracy which he saw as underpinning both Western capitalism and East European state socialism.

He regarded both forms of society as being 'objectified' -- ie. technocracy is seen as the reified separation of subject and object, in which the subject is dominated by the object. A clear connection exists between this notion of technocracy and its culture industry and Marx's work on alienation (Marx & Engels, 1981). This theme was developed by all the School's members, and emerges particularly strongly in the contemporary work of Habermas. So it is Horkheimer's assumptions which underpin the School's 'critical theory'. This critical theory is centrally concerned with a totality understanding of the superstructures -- ie. a critique of ideology from within the realist paradigm. Further, the School from Horkheimer (1972: 26) to Habermas expressed a concern with how this realist understanding of ideology could be used for praxis. In their work on ideology and praxis the School (following Horkheimer's lead) also drew on a wide variety of disciplines -- including psychology, historical materialist work, philosophy, sociology, communication, and linguistics. Given the similarity of these concerns with those of CCS, Horkheimer's approach could clearly be viewed as pioneering CCS work.

* THEODOR ADORNO only joined the School during its exile in the U.S.A. (He was also an exile from Nazi Germany). In 1953 he became a co-director of the School (now back in Frankfurt) with Horkheimer, a position, in fact, which serves to illustrate his obvious prominence within the School. His central influence can be most clearly discerned in his co-authorship with Horkheimer of the Dialectic of Enlightenment: the School's most centrally important work from a CCS perspective. However, despite his clearly central position, Adorno's work -- especially his later writing -- remains, in many respects, unlike the rest of the School's because of his return to a philosophical idealism.

Adorno developed the extreme notion that 'reason' was so defeated in the world in which he lived that it could only survive in the intellectual products of critical individuals such as himself. Were he alive, Adorno might see the contemporary rise of post-modernism and the New Right as confirmation of his position. (Such 'leftist monasticism' would, however, if taken too far, remove the left from a real engagement with social problems into the sort of Left-Hegelianism opposed by Marx in The Holy Family). Unfortunately because of Adorno's co-directorship his later philosophical (pessimistic) work is often used by critics as evidence of problems with the Frankfurt School, while the School's more optimistic (praxis-oriented) work of Marcuse and Habermas is marginalized.

Adorno's concern with philosophy and music stamped itself on the School's character, and much of his early work on mass culture, in the era of monopoly capitalism, is of real interest for CCS. Adorno saw the contemporary world as dominated by a bureaucratized technological order ('instrumental reason') -- an order founded by the bourgeoisie at the time of the Renaissance (during which time the bourgeoisies were a progressive force). He traced this 'progressiveness' into his reading of bourgeois music of that era. However, subsequently the bourgeois order became conservative and indeed -- according to Adorno (in Arato & Gebhardt, 1978:26-48) -- destructive of that which the Enlightenment had originally stood for, i.e. critical individualism and personal freedom. In the contemporary technocratic, planned and bureaucratized order, Adorno saw critical thinking as having been destroyed and/or 'reified' (i.e. the 'dialectic' had been 'killed' -- Adorno & Horkheimer, 1979). The notion that the dialectic could be 'stilled' by

cultural co-option was an important theme in Frankfurt School work, reaching a highpoint in Marcuse's One dimensional Man. This notion may not initially seem to be particularly relevant in contemporary South Africa. However, this might change given the attempts by Western/local capital and the South African state to tame the struggle (and/or co-opt certain sectors of the struggle). If this process succeeds (and it may) then this Adorno-derived notion of a stilled dialectic may well prove useful.

At any rate, Adorno's 1973) twist in dialectical thinking (which underpinned much Frankfurt School thinking), represents an important epistemological moment in the development of this concept. However, whereas in Adorno's work this perception resulted in a deep pessimism (see Adorno, 1973, 1978), others in the School -- especially Marcuse and Habermas -- sought instead to find ways of 'reactivating' the 'dialectic' in an aufhebung of 'instrumental reason'. Adorno's pessimism aside (which is a problem for a praxis-oriented CCS approach), his work on culture and especially on aesthetics (to which he finally retreated) remain a challenging 'totality' interpretation for those in CCS to grapple with.

* WALTER BENJAMIN was never fully integrated into the Frankfurt School although he was engaged on a commission basis in a number of the School's projects before its exile. (He died in 1940 trying to escape from Nazi-ruled Europe). Benjamin, however, represents a prime example of how the School's work at the subjective-objective interface can be developed in a (optimistic) praxis-oriented direction. It is thus hardly surprising that Benjamin's work exercised an enormous influence over Enzensberger when he attempted to formulate a (neo-Marxist) praxis-approach to the Information Age.

From a CCS perspective it is Benjamin's (1973) 'The work of art in an age of mechanical reproduction' which represents a key text. He develops the classical realist notion of the inseparability of superstructural products (culture, knowledge, etc) from their material context, for example class relations and technology. Although working within the Frankfurt School's conceptual approach to culture, Benjamin developed a key innovation within the School's reading, namely an explicitly optimistic note. So whereas Adorno perhaps represents the extreme statement of Frankfurt School pessimism about the 'cult' of technocracy, Benjamin attempts to find the contradictions within technological society. Benjamin's key recognition was that there was no need to be uniformly pessimistic about the culture industry being developed by capitalism. As a Frankfurt School member he did recognize the culture industry as a force for conservatism, and as an anti-revolutionary tool (ie. its use as a mechanism of co-opting the working class and/or undermining its revolutionary potential); and as centrally implicated in the development of reactionary ideology and fascism in the era in which he lived. However, Benjamin also saw the potentially positive side of the culture industry: this industry produced technological innovations (at the superstructural level) which lent themselves to counter-co-option by a creative Left.

Benjamin recognized that the very MASS -- ie. anti-elitist nature -- of the modern media held the potential for giving recipients (the audience) power (Benjamin, 1977:391-2), and for transforming 'common people' into mass communicative producers (Benjamin, 1977:398). Herein lay the basis for Benjamin's optimistic interpretation: if capitalism created the preconditions for socialism; so too did the mass

media/mass culture create the preconditions for participative popular culture by creating the technological conditions to facilitate this. Film was offered as a classic example (Benjamin, 1977: 401): film might serve as an excellent Nazi propaganda medium; however, the left were equally able to make use of this medium. (This is even more true in the video age -- See Media Development, Vol 36, No 4/1989). Benjamin's voluntaristic leftism (a leftism which stresses getting involved in 'seeking out' and 'generating' contradictions rather than passively waiting for 'history' to deliver the revolution) is an important epistemological moment within the Frankfurt School's work. Further, Benjamin's optimism represents a crucial insight for a CCS concerned with the development of a leftist media. Benjamin's insight was, in fact, developed further by Enzensberger and Habermas (discussed in Chapter 3). If we read Benjamin's insights into the contemporary context it is possible to use his ideas to construct the conception of a producers' democracy within the Information Age.

Benjamin's notion of technik (see Roberts, 1982:157-162), in particular, foreshadows Habermas' notions of 'purposive rational action', 'communicative action' and of superstructural praxis (Habermas, 1976, 1979, 1984), especially in so far as both Benjamin and Habermas engage in a sort of 'marriage' of historical materialism and hermeneutics -- the superstructural activity (practice) of intellectuals was seen to be potentially revolutionary at the interface of historical material analysis and a hermeneutic-type reconstruction of reality. What was required was that intellectuals needed to be organized in an interventionist way to make use of the contradictions thrown up by capitalism. Benjamin rejected any Luddite-type hostility towards technology. (In this respect Benjamin differs from other

Frankfurt School members, and the contemporary "Greens", who the Frankfurt School gave rise to). The Greens' Luddite-like 'in-principle' opposition to technology/ industrialization stands in stark contrast to the Benjamin-position, because for Benjamin, technology was something to be mastered and used for leftist ends. As he said: "the adjustment of reality to the masses and the masses to reality is a process of unlimited scope" (Benjamin, 1977:389). Furthermore, this 'adjustment' required intellectual (ie. superstructural) practice: intellectuals would be required to develop strategies for turning existing (material and subjective) conditions to leftist advantage.

* HERBERT MARCUSE joined the School in 1933 (the year it fled the ascendance of Naziism). As a result of his early Frankfurt School experience co-inciding with the School's USA-period, Marcuse imbued more of the Anglo-Saxon intellectual tradition than did the other Frankfurt School members. (Marcuse, in fact became an American, never returning to Germany, like the other School members).

Habermas and Marcuse represent the most important contributors to the School's later period. Marcuse's enormously impacted the American New Left during the 1960s. His <u>One Dimensional Man</u> is the clearest application of the School's critique of ideology and their notion of the 'culture industry' to the U.S.A.-dominated post-Second World War world. (A dominance also found in South Africa).

A central feature of the Frankfurt School from Horkheimer through to Habermas has been the concern with the fate of the socialist revolution as a form of human emancipation in the rationalist mould (ie. deriving in large measure from the rationalism of European Romanticism). But in Marcuse's work this concern is especially evident. For a South African

CCS concerned with the role of the superstructures within a leftist struggle the potential value of this work needs to be addressed. Marcuse, as a New Leftist, was concerned with a voluntaristic approach, par excellance, to revolution. If the Frankfurt School as a whole emphasized the early work of Marx (ie. the Marx 'abandoned' by Althusser), Marcuse places a particularly heavy emphasis on this early (Hegelian) analysis (Marcuse, 1955). Marcuse is centrally concerned with an interpretation of revolution aimed at 'emancipation' and de-alienation (Marcuse, 1969). As such he draws heavily on Marx & Engel's 1844 Manuscripts. This he then links to Freudian structuralism (which as with Marx's structuralism is a 'rationalist' structuralism -- ie. must not be confused with the anti-rationalist structuralism of the Althusserians and post-structuralists). Marcuse uses this Marx-Freud couplet to examine the culture industry as a 'machinery' of 'pyschological' manipulation which serves the interests of technocracy (whether in its First World capitalist form, or its Second World state 'socialist' form). But Marcuse goes further than critique -- he seeks psychological (and leftist) emancipation from this technocratic repression. This results in the Marcusian notion of a self-emancipation derived from a 'Freudian Marxism' (1969a). It is work that is highly compatible with the culturalism of E.P. Thompson and Raymond Williams with their stress on an 'active subjective' engagement from the subaltern class.

It is of significancè to note that of all the Frankfurt School work, it was Marcuse's that most influenced any form of praxis -- ie. the 1960s New Left Movement was centrally influenced by Marcuse. Given the impact of the New Left -- via Perry Anderson -- on the early history of CCS (see Punter, 1986: 78-81) it is surprising to find so few

references to the Frankfurt School in general and Marcuse in particular in CCS work. More surprising still is the failure of the Birmingham School to fully examine the tension between the rationalism of the Frankfurt School/Marcuse (and hence of the New Left) on the one hand, and the anti-rationalism of Althusserian structuralism (incorporated into CCS) on the other hand.

A centrally important aspect of Marcuse's work for contemporary South African CCS is his understanding of how the Americanized culture industry is able to 'co-opt' oppositional practices and 'nullify' them. It is surprising that the Birmingham School (a School that has centrally influenced South African CCS) has paid so little attention to this work by Marcuse. For Marcuse the culture industry is anti-dialectical and results in a one dimensional world of technocratic rationality (Marcuse, 1968). Marcuse goes a long way to explaining the conservative technocracy and slick media image-building of, for example, Thatcherism in Britain.

Further, Marcuse's work on 'Repressive Tolerance' (in Wolff et al, 1965:81-123) is especially valuable in explaining how the liberal culture industry nullifies dialectical conflict through a 'tolerant' co-optation of opposition into itself. This refusal to 'engage' substantive opposition becomes an extremely effective form of repression that is quite totalitarian in its implications. (This is, in one sense, an extension of Adorno's ideas on the dialectic within a contemporary context).

In South African terms, Marcuse's ideas demonstrate the potential 'danger' (to South African Leftists) of a 'reformed' Right which has learned the art of liberal 'tolerance', and which has tried to develop

and co-opt, for example, a black middle class sector. The NP's 1990 reforms, if successfully carried through, hold the potential for removing much of the 'revolutionary potential' (the 'dialectic') in the South African situation. The likelihood of this is increased given the world balance of power in the 1990s. In such a co-optation the superstructures of the Information Age will play a prominent role. (It should be noted that MNC succeeded in these sort of moves in the Philippines by installing the liberal Acquino government). As it is, Marcuse's work already goes some way towards explaining the 'liberalization' of sectors of South African leftist praxis (eg. the UDF and its organic intellectuals). Leftists in some South African -- eg. BCM, AZAPO, CAL, WOSA -- have called this liberalization 'co-option'. Liberalization occurred because throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s the English-liberal universities and the 'liberal' churches offered some of the only 'spaces' from which the Left could operate. The academic 'islands', in particular, played a prominent role in the growth of South African leftist praxis. But they remained solidly liberal institutions. It was not possible for the Left protected by these institutions to remain untouched by this liberalism. From this point of view alone, Marcuse's 'warnings' about possible 'co-option' need to be taken seriously. In other words, a CCS reading of South African Marxist epistemology needs to seriously examine the possibility that a 'liberalism' has been read into historical materialism (a form of co-optation?) because of the nature of the space provided.

Marcuse's work on the culture industry, technochratic ideology and on a Hegelian (anti-Stalinist) reinterpretation of the Marxist method (dialectical totality) represents a significant moment in the reconstruction of historical materialism in the direction of a New

Leftist praxis-oriented 'totality' approach to culture. His theories form an interesting extrapolation into the 1960s of the approach developed by the Frankfurt School in the 1930s-1950s. As such it forms a bridge between the Frankfurt School of the 1930s and 1940s and Habermas' work in the 1970s-1980s. Certainly Habermas' proposal to 'reconstruct' historical materialism can be seen to have its epistemological roots in Marcuse's work.

* JURGEN HABERMAS became an assistant to Adorno in the late 1950s. (The School had returned to Frankfurt in 1950). This association introduced Habermas to the Frankfurt School oeuvre. But Habermas bursts out of the framework set by the School's earlier theorists. The School's work as leftists dealing with the subject-object interface -- ie. their exploratory work in dealing with the interface between the realist and interpretive paradigms -- was developed by Habermas (1979, 1980, 1984) into a systematic attempt to 'reconstruct' historical materialism such that 'communication' and the subject-object interface are made a central feature of leftist praxis. If South Africa is seen as a developing sub-metropole of MNC (see Innes, 1984) then, by extension, a South African praxis-oriented CCS will derive value from Habermas's ideas. While authoritarian and coercive methods underpin the South African hegemony, any application of Habermas's view of praxis to South African conditions will necessitate modifications to his ideas (see Louw, 1982). However, as reforms proceed, so his ideas will become more and more applicable.

Further, Habermas' work has moved away from the earlier work of the School because he had to deal with a changed context: there have been significant shifts in academic debate occasioned by the increasingly

apparent 'collapse of the Marxist dream', the rise of post-modern and post-structural ('discourse') thinking, and the resultant challenge to rationalism and the realist paradigm in particular.

In answering these challenges, Habermas insists on making a 'totality' reading of Marx central to historical material analysis. He develops this 'totality' approach to the realist paradigm (Habermas, 1979, 1984) through spelling out and expanding on the Frankfurt School's work on 'Critical Theory'. Habermas thereby explicitly reformulates the historical material reading of history. His interpretation moves away from explaining social developments exclusively, or even primarily, in terms of economics, and toward an interpretation which accords equal prominence to the role played by the superstructures, such as communication and knowledge (Habermas, 1979). Clearly, Lukacs, Gramsci and the earlier Frankfurt School members had all worked in this same area of concern. However, Habermas insisted on a methodological rigour unmatched by the others, necessitated no doubt by the challenge posed by post-modernist debates, and the growing opposition to the historical material paradigm in the context within which he worked. In the process Habermas produced an important ('totality') 'reformulation' of Marx without abandoning the essence of the realist paradigm.

Significantly, Habermas' work has led to the production of an approach to superstructural products -- ie. culture, knowledge and the media -- located at the interface of the realist and interpretive paradigms, but which remains rigorously 'realist' in essence. This method is best illustrated in Habermas' work on examining the epistemology of Western knowledge, science and technology (Habermas, 1978) -- an important part of Habermas' critique of technocratic

ideology. In this work he combines an historical materialist with a hermeneutic reading of the texts. He does this in order to 'reconstruct' their meaning within the framework of an (reconstructed) historical materialist understanding of the context of their production.

Given CCS's concern with 'problematizing' 'traditional' academic practices (which stems from the incorporation of the Hoggart and Leavis tradition into CCS), Habermas' method of (an historical material-hermeneutic) re-reading/reconstruction of texts represents an important tool. What is especially important is that Habermas' approach to cultural texts is 'reconstructive' rather than 'de-constructive' (eg. Derrida) or 'constructive' (eg. Gadamer's hermeneutics or the Russian Formalists). 'Reconstruction' differs from the 'construction' in so far as Habermas explicitly reads the text he is 'reconstructing' through an historical material interpretation -- ie. he contextualizes the text. A 'constructive' reading merely tries to capture the 'truth' as seemingly intended by the author. Habermas' approach is therefore a leftist (historical materialist) 'hermeneutics' -- ie. the interpretive paradigm is re-read through the realist paradigm (see Habermas, 1979).

More important, however, is that Habermas' 'reconstructive' method offers CCS a 'means of access' to culture that is explicitly not part of the de-constructive and/or post-structural/post modernist mould. If Adorno represents the one Frankfurt School member who drifted in this post-modernist direction (when he reached the pessimistic conclusion -- Adorno, 1973:361-2 -- that in a post-Auschwitz world the foundations for ultimate knowledge had been removed), Habermas represents a leftist who explicitly rejects this de-constructive pessimism.

Habermas'(1979:1-68) position is that we can still achieve a systematic rational philosophy, which he terms 'universal pragmatics'. Habermas' 'universal pragmatics' represents an attempt to 'recapture' the main thrust of the realist paradigm and build this into a rationalist answer to post-modernism -- but an answer that does not shrink from dealing with 'the subjective' (in the way many Marxists have done). This, of course, places Habermas' work on communication in opposition to the Althusserian (anti-rationalist) 'discourse' work on the superstructures. For a CCS leaning towards the humanism of the culturalist approach -- concerned with developing an approach to communication that sees itself as working within a New Leftist framework -- Habermas' work is an important source upon which to draw. However, a CCS that leans towards the anti-rationalism of Althusserian-structuralism would be less inclined towards Habermas' position. Stuart Hall's critique of Habermas (see Grossberg, 1986: 45-46) needs to be seen in this light.

Important too is that Habermas' work attempts to go beyond analysis and critique -- his is not a passive reflection on the problem (ie. Habermas does not fall prey to the critical passivity that has inflicted, for example, Lukacs, Adorno & Horkheimer, and the Althusserians). Habermas does not stop at a critique of technocratic ideology (Habermas, 1980). Rather, he attempts to find a 'way out' in the form of a 'theory of action' ('praxis') which ignores neither the objective nor subjective dimensions of domination (Habermas, 1979, 1984). This action theory has much in common with Benjamin's theory of Technik. The theory of communicative action seeks to develop the 'emancipatory interest' which underpins the critical sciences (Habermas, 1978:370-371). Habermas' core assumption is that the goal

of the human rationalist project is that emancipation equals a socialist democracy, an assumption of central importance in this thesis. (Habermas regards this rationalist project as worthy of 'defence' against post-modernist skepticism and de-construction). Habermas' reconstruction of historical materialism is geared toward facilitating the realization of a socialist democracy through an 'action theory' which is concerned with liberation in terms of both objective (economic) and subjective (democratic) rationality. It represents a valuable notion for a CCS geared toward the production of a knowledge of culture and the superstructures with a 'praxis-intent' -- ie. CCS in South Africa (see Tomaselli et al, 1988a:11-22).

Habermas' (1976) work on 'superstructural crises' is crucial. He identifies a 'new form' of crisis in capitalist society, namely 'legitimation crises'. Habermas' argument is that, whereas economic contradictions may have been important within the Victorian capitalism analyzed by Marx, within the advanced technocracies -- whether MNC or state socialism -- it is legitimation (superstructural) crises, rather than economic crises that represent the central dialectical contradictions. The revolutions in Eastern Europe produced by legitimation crises in the late 1980s appear to have confirmed Habermas' position. For Habermas, 'democracy' has been proclaimed by advanced technocracies. But this democracy is <u>de facto</u> at odds with the 'needs' of the technocratic rationality underpinning both monopoly capitalism and state socialism. For Habermas this creates an enormous potential crisis for these societies -- if Leftists can get the citizens of technocratic societies to demand to exercise their (proclaimed, but not as yet, 'realized') democratic rights. Habermas'

argument in this regard bears a remarkable similarity to Enzensberger's (1974) ideas on superstructural crises and praxis. However, unlike Enzensberger, Habermas grounds his ideas more firmly with a 'materialist' (or at least 'totality') approach, such that his work does not drift as close to 'idealism' (ie. an over-emphasis of the superstructural dimension) as does Enzensberger's.

Of definite value to South Africa is Habermas' (1974) work on a 'public sphere'. ( Habermas' writing incorporates a relationship between the notion of a public sphere and of superstructural praxis). A public sphere represents an 'ideal dialogue' (democracy) or an institutionalized reason. Within Habermasian logic such a social dialogue is incompatible with either First World MNC or Second World state socialism. The realization of democracy (a public sphere) would represent a superstructural crisis for technocratic society because it would de-objectify -- ie. de-alienate (see Marx, 1981:70-7) -- society.

More recently, Habermas (1990) extended his ideas on democratic communication in an attempt to provide the European Left with a 'answer' to the implications of the collapse of state socialism in Eastern Europe. He argues that "socialism will disappear only when it no longer has an object of criticism" -- ie. "the hope that humanity can emancipate itself from self-imposed tutelage and degrading living conditions has not lost its power" (Habermas, 1990: 21). Habermas' thesis is that the Left's goal needs to be seen as wider than merely a redistribution of wealth. Rather, the goal is a "redistribution of power" (Habermas, 1990:19). This requires a shift way from the narrow leftist concern with 'economics' towards a concern with "generating ferment" in the public sphere (1990: 21); as well as an on-going critique of skewed power relationships (1990: 19) and of capitalism

(1990:21). For Habermas (1990:13) communication under capitalism is a top-down "controlled process of legitimation", and hence fails to measure up to his notion of democratic communication. It is up to the Left to challenge this so as to build democracy, and thereby help to redistribute social power more equitably.

Habermas has thus extended 'critical theory' beyond theory -- there are clear political implications in this work of a similar nature to those being developed by the Birmingham School (see Johnson, 1986:277). Of special significance is the importance of Habermas' work when considering the role of media/communication: (a) in the creation of democracy; and (b) in empowering the masses to challenge skewed power relationships. The importance of these ideas for developing a South African leftist hegemony (that avoids the errors of Eastern Europe) cannot be over-estimated.

The above summaries indicate that, as Held (1980) has noted, a considerable degree of theoretical coherence can be traced from Horkheimer through to Habermas. Despite difficulties with defining the 'Frankfurt School' exactly, for the purposes of this thesis, Held's contention that the School is synonymous with "critical theory" (see also Horkheimer, 1972), will be adopted. This 'theory' can easily be identified as early stirrings in the direction of a CCS, with the later work being highly useful within a praxis-oriented CCS. The important elements of this theory are:

(a) An Hegelian-Marxist concern with 'totality' (the subject-object dialectic), similar to Lukacs;

(b) A move away from economism toward a concern with the superstructures (especially the media), in a way that they are examined

in the context of being in dialectical unity with an historical-material base;

(c) A concern with ideology from within a rationalist perspective (see Sayer, 1979). Their work in this area is important in the contemporary context as it provides a rationalist alternative to post-modernism and post-structuralism.

(d) A leftist alternative to Leninist state socialism which none-the-less retains a number of Marxist features, such as: the central role of commodity production within capitalism, and the reification resulting from this; the contradictions within capital (over-production and over-capitalization); and the notion that human liberation requires de-alienation, which in turn requires the abolition of capitalist relations of production. These concerns they carried over into the School's concern with the superstructures. In so doing the School produced the first significant leftist analysis of the emerging capitalist relations of production associated with information technology. How important this would become only became apparent from the 1960s onwards. The Frankfurt School's theoretical work in this area of superstructural analysis offers a valuable leftist theoretical adjunct to Gramsci's more practically-oriented work.

Since this thesis is concerned with developing a reconstructed historical materialist approach to CCS, and not with the Frankfurt School per se, it is impossible to examine the School's vast body of work in any depth. Rather, an attempt will be made to generalize a 'core' out of their large body of work. This will necessitate glossing over some of the differences internal to the School, although those differences of relevance to this thesis will be examined. What follows is a selective appropriation of aspects of their work, especially

relating to the 'culture industry'. The School's work on authority, Nazism, psychology and their critique of Enlightenment ideology will only be alluded to when it is required for the primary purpose of this thesis: the development of a New Leftist approach to communication for contemporary South African conditions.

The Frankfurt School's method

What lay at the heart of all Frankfurt School work was the attempt by its members to examine 'culture' as Marxists. To do this they transferred Marx's realist method from his concern with the economy (and commodity fetishism) to an examination of the superstructures: they attempted to unpack the 'hidden essence' of the capitalist culture industry much as Marx had sought to unpack the workings of the capitalist economic process. Some of the key texts in this unpacking of the 'culture industry' are: Adorno & Horkheimer's Dialectic of Enlightenment; Benjamin's Illuminations; Adorno's Prisms; and Marcuse' One dimensional man. (See also Arato & Gebhardt, 1978). Throughout they insisted on the 'totality' of the process being examined -- the economic and the cultural were part of the same dialectical process. For the Frankfurt School, revealing the hidden essence of capitalism meant explicitly studying the total process (of the dialectically related subject and object). Hence they paid much more explicit attention to the subject-object interface than CCS has done to date and about an important revision of Marxism (taken to its logical conclusion by Habermas' call for a 'reconstruction' of historical materialism). It is a revision/reconstruction that matches the 'revision' of capitalism away from heavy industry towards 'information'. Instead of branding their revision as 'passive' and 'unrevolutionary', the

Frankfurt School should rather be characterized as the LEAST conservative historical materialists: ie. they managed to keep up with the mutations of capitalism.

Another significant aspect of Frankfurt School's method was their attempt to examine the compatibility of Marxist structuralism and Freudian structuralism, a project that reached its zenith with Marcuse's Eros and Civilization (one of the optimistic moments of the School's work). Freud served the same purpose in the Frankfurt School's studies as Althusserian structuralism served in the Birmingham School's work -- ie. if Marx was concerned with 'extracting' the structures of the capitalist economy (ie. the material); so Freud tried to 'extract' the structures of the mind (ie. the subjective). These two structuralisms (of the 'material' and the 'subjective') could be read together. This represented an 'application' of Lukacs' totality method -- applied by the Frankfurt School to an analysis of Nazism and authority (Adorno et al, 1982; Arato & Gebhardt, 1978); and to the culture industry (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1979; Arato & Gebhardt, 1978; and Marcuse 1968). For a South African left that is confronted by (the subjectivisms of) racism, nationalism and tribalism, this marriage of Marx and Freud offers certain interesting analytical possibilities. Further, the incorporation of Freudian 'superstructural' structuralism has clearly helped the School's heir, Habermas, to deal with the superstructuralism of post-modernism and post-structuralism more effectively than other historical materialists.

The Frankfurt School's structuralism is based on the rationalism of the realist paradigm, unlike Althusser's anti-rationalist structuralism. This is highly significant given the context within

which the Frankfurt School worked -- ie. a era of fascism, anti-rationalism and Auschwitz (which the School saw as an outgrowth of the Enlightenment/capitalist project). That the post-Auschwitz world has seen a growing abandonment of belief in rationalism and modernism poses a real threat to the rationalist interpretation of the Leftist project. The School's members were pioneers in considering the distortions of Enlightenment-rationalism, but (outside of Adorno) the School did not sink into a post-modernist pessimism. Instead they developed a realist method in which the original rationalist project could be revived and turned in the direction of a socialist democracy.

Habermas, in particular, develops this Frankfurt School concern with rationalism. He defends rationalism against the post-modern critique -- the rationalist project was not be to abandoned, but rather 'completed' (see Habermas, 1979, 1980, 1983, 1987, 1990). Stuart Hall states of this: "I think Habermas' defense of the Enlightenment/ modernist project is worthy and courageous, but I think it's not sufficiently exposed to some of the deeply contradictory tendencies in modern culture to which the postmodernist theories quite correctly draw our attention" (in Grossberg, 1986:45). Hall adds "the traditional Habermasian defence won't do" (in Grossberg, 1986: 47). Hall's argument ignores the fact that to abandon rationalism is to abandon the leftist project. Hall cannot, on the one hand, claim that "I still operate somewhere within what I understand to be the discursive limits of a marxist position" (in Grossberg, 1986: 58), and on the other hand abandon the rationalist project. This constitutes a <u>non-sequitor</u> (see Sayer, 1979). Habermas understands that the crucial assumption underpinning the leftist project is that the human world can be made more reasonable (rational) by human action. It is this assumption that

Habermas will not forgo, because to abandon it is to 'admit defeat' and close down the leftist project.

In defending this rationalism, Habermas' is not (as claimed by Hall) operating from a lack of "exposure" to arguments of the post-modernist theorists. Neither does Habermas see it as a single-dimensional project (Hall in Grossberg, 1986:46). Rather, Habermas recognizes that to accept the post-modernist argument/critique is to open the door to an anti-rationalism that contradicts the very essence of the leftist project. (From Habermas' perspective, it is no accident that the post-modern era is associated with a revival of fascism, Nazism, chauvinist nationalism, and Reagan-Thatcher-Kohl's calls for unbridled 'free-enterprise' and a curtailment of 'social welfare', and the growth of charismatic religions and fundamentalism (see Shariati, 1980). Habermas, like the rest of the Frankfurt School, explicitly recognizes that the modernist/rationalist project has taken some wrong turns (in both its capitalist and state socialist forms). As leftists, however, the School (and Habermas) are more concerned with the wrong-turn of Marxist-Leninism. But the Habermasian argument would be that even if Marxist-Leninism was a wrong turn, this is no reason to abandon the whole Leftist-project of social rationality.

This realist rationalism is an important consideration for a South African CCS faced with the choice of developing either in the direction of a theoreticism and superstructuralism (Harland, 1987) or cultural praxis aimed at challenging apartheid and its after-effects. In making the choice, it needs to be noted that the Frankfurt School's appropriation of Freudian structuralism leads to Habermas' reconstruction of historical materialism (still firmly within the

realist tradition), while Althusser's structuralism leads ultimately to the anti-realist (post-structuralist and post-modernist) 'discourse' work of Lacan and Derrida. It is Habermas' Frankfurt School-derived work which offers a contemporary leftist answer to the challenge posed to the realist paradigm by post-modernist neo-conservatism (Habermas, 1987). Habermas' notion that 'modernity' is a project still awaiting completion (see Habermas in Foster, 1983:3-15) is more in accord with the principles of a leftist optimism. This optimism offers an important theoretical underpinning upon which to build leftist media work within MNC.

Habermas' work, as well as the work of the earlier Frankfurt School, represents, in general, a significant theoretical moment in the development of a leftist media/communication praxis. Their analyses, in fact represent important moments within historical materialist media analysis. As Hoffman (1983:10) has noted, Adorno and Horkheimer's Dialectic of Enlightenment (1979) is certainly "one theoretical root of a materialist theory of mass communication". Their pioneering work as leftist theorists concerned with the media and the 'culture industry' can hardly be over-estimated when tracing out the epistemology leading toward a reconstructed historical materialism (wherein one can examine the 'subjective'/superstructures from within the historical material paradigm). Adorno and Horkheimer -- (for the sake of the generalization required in this chapter) -- produced the seminal Frankfurt School work. Certainly from a media perspective, Horkheimer & Adorno's Dialectic of Enlightenment can be taken as giving us the core of the School's method, namely a totality interpretation of the realist paradigm.

This subject-object totality is of central concern for the

reconstruction of historical materialism proposed by Habermas -- a reconstruction seen to be potentially valuable for CCS. The School's totality concern emerged in a critique of ideology -- i.e. a critique of the dichotomization of Western knowledge into objectivism (positivist-science) and subjectivism (idealist-philosophy); and in an attempt to 'transcend' this dichotomy in their own work. The attempt to 'bridge' the subject-object 'divide' has manifested itself in three forms in the Frankfurt School:

(a) The existential-Marxism (ie. existential: subjective/Marxism: objective) of Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse;

(b) The attempt to integrate hermeneutics (the subjective) into historical materialism as undertaken by Habermas. Benjamin made some tentative moves in this direction much earlier on; and

(c) The attempts to integrate psycho-analysis (the subjective) into historical materialism (objective) by Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse and Adorno et al's Authoritarian Personality.

The first two (ie. linking the realist paradigm with existentialism and hermeneutics) are especially useful for a South African CCS concerned with cultural and media analysis and praxis. The third (ie. Marx-Freud interface) is possibly useful in so far as it can help to explain something of the authoritarianism underpinning Afrikaner nationalism. It may also assist leftist analysts of racism and tribalism.

The School's work may, like Lukacs' appear overly esoteric and theoretical in the context of the practical 'struggle' in South Africa. However, their concern with 'totality' is of more than 'philosophical' or theoretical interest. It is significant because the School (and

Lukacs) have helped lay the foundations for a methodological rigour in terms of which historical materialists can move into a (theoretical and practical) concern with the 'subjective', media and communication but without 'abandoning' or downplaying the 'material' in historical materialism. (It could be argued that the Althusserian notion of 'autonomous' superstructures amounts to such an 'abandonment' of the material which the Frankfurt School avoid). Epistemologically, the Frankfurt School members were certainly the pioneers of a Marxist communication and media theory. (Lenin was arguably a practical pioneer in certain aspects of media). But the School's theory can be more easily operationalized than Lukacs' because the School dealt less in 'philosophy' and more with 'communication studies'.

The Frankfurt School's contribution to a reconstructed historical materialism, however, went beyond a philosophical (existential-Marxist) concern with the 'subjective'. (It is in this regard that the Frankfurt School differs from Lukacs, in so far as the School's work goes beyond 'philosophy'). Its members' interest with the subject-object totality led them into a specific concern with the media, and what they -- following Horkheimer & Adorno (1979) -- called 'the culture industry' and 'mass culture' (aesthetics). In so doing, the Frankfurt School's members became the first historical materialist theorists to explicitly analyze the media. It must be conceded that the School's work was theoretical, rather than practical, which has led to much Marxist criticism of Frankfurt School work. However, as will be argued -- (in Chapter 3) when Korsch's work is referred to -- a leftist communicology is in need of both theory and practice. For a Left confronted by the Information Age, a (leftist) theory of media and communication is as crucial as is practice. What is more, since South

Africa is a (peripheral) player in the MNC/Information Age relations of production, South African leftists are also in need of a communication/media theory.

## Frankfurt School as pioneers of an historical materialist media analysis

The seminal Frankfurt school work on media was Adorno and Horkheimer's Dialectic of Enlightenment (1979) (first published in 1947). Adorno and Horkheimer were clearly sensitive to changes in the historical material conditions about them, and thereby came to perceive the growing influence of the mass media in society (ie. simultaneously in Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union and the USA). This work directly reflects the impact of the Nazi-Germany and USA contexts within which they had worked. It was, in particular, their sensitivity to the early changes taking place within capitalism, in a direction that would eventually produce the Information Age, that led the School's members, (as historical materialists) into a concern with studying the media. The key terms in their media analyses were those of 'the culture industry' and 'affirmative culture'. The seminal notion of 'culture industry' had its origins in Adorno and Horkheimer's (1979:120-167) essay "The Culture Industry: enlightenment as mass deception", first published in 1947). Marcuse (1972:88-133) extended this notion in his work on "The Affirmative Character of Culture". The notion of 'culture industry' was subsequently considerably expanded by Marcuse (1968), and more importantly, for leftist praxis, developed in a direction that sought out liberatory possibilities and/or ways of challenging such cultural domination.

For anyone concerned with the relationship between the capitalist

relations of production and the media, the Frankfurt School work on the 'culture industry' is important (despite problems with a certain 'reification' of the term). The 'culture industry' was defined as a '(super)structure' where culture is commoditized (ie. is produced and distributed) in accordance with the 'needs' of the (monopoly) capitalist relations of production. By reading Marx and Freud together the School's members arrived at the notion of a culture industry in which the distorted relations of production of capitalism (Marx) were matched by 'psychological distortions' manufactured by a commodified culture 'machinery'. This represents something of a Marxified reading of Freud. It is significant that the notion of a 'culture industry' was developed by Adorno and Horkheimer living in the USA in the 1930s and 1940s. That this 'industry' (which was being 'pioneered' in the USA contemporaneously with the Frankfurt School's stay there) has subsequently served as a media 'model' for much of the rest of the world (see Tunstall, 1977) -- as the Information Age spread across the globe -- has dramatically increased the relevance of their work. For example, Irwin Manoim's work on the South African black press reveals that this Americanized culture industry began penetrating the South African black media during the 1940s (Manoim, 1983:26-28, 32). It was a process pioneered by Paver's Zonk publication (Manoim, 1983: 40, 62-63, 66, 69), further developed by Dagbreekpers' Bona magazine (Manoim, 1983:73), and by Bailey's Drum (Manoim, 1983:79-88). Reading these developments through an application of the Frankfurt School's theory provides a valuable explanation of the processes taking place.

Adorno and Horkheimer's (1979:167) seminal essay in this area ends

with a harsh condemnation of this Americanized reification (objectification/ commodification) of culture in which they say that this 'industry' may grant freedom of choice:

> But freedom to choose an ideology -- since ideology always reflects economic coercion -- everywhere proves to be freedom to choose what is always the same ... The most intimate reactions of human beings have been so thoroughly reified that the idea of anything specific to themselves now persists as an utterly abstract notion: personality scarcely signifies anything more than shining white teeth and freedom from body odor and emotions.

The School's members were horrified by this 'mass culture' precisely because they saw it as unparticipative ('undemocratic') and psychologically manipulative -- ie. it represents the opposite of 'popular culture'. In this scenario humans are reduced to cheerful robots, condemned to live out their lives in the second-hand reality given to them by the culture industry (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1979:126). Significantly, this process is uni-directional -- from the communicator (employed by the technocrats) to the recipients (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1979:122). The recipients are not treated as rational human beings, but rather as 'things' to be manipulated (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1979:38). Far from facilitating democracy, such a culture industry destroys the possibility of democracy. Ideas such as these need to be taken seriously during any attempt at constructing a left-wing media -- for example, if the South African left ever gain any influence over the SA Broadcasting Corporation. A Frankfurt School understanding of the media would be usefully incorporated into left-wing media training as a touchstone for what left-wing media do NOT want to be -- ie. uni-directional, top-down ('undemocratic') communication which de-activates people. The building of democratic participative media (see Nigg & Wade, 1980; Mattelart, 1986; Louw, 1989a; Stuart, 1989; Criticos, 1989; Tomaselli & Prinsloo, 1990; White, 1990; as well as the special issues

of Media Development, Vol 34, 4/1987, and Vol 36, No 4/1989, and Vol 37, 4/1990) which aim to 'activate' people and help to generate popular culture, can only benefit by staffers being aware of their antithesis -- the culture industry.

Through the culture industry the masses imbue the dominant values of their society, or as Adorno & Horkheimer (1979:127) say, "the might of industrial society is lodged in men's minds". (This is an area where Volosinov's work on how signs implant 'objective' domination into people's minds (the subjective) is important ancillary reading to the Frankfurt School). Once integrated into this mass culture, people are 'passified' (and become their own controllers). This spells the destruction of popular culture. Within South Africa one could arrive at the conclusion that the School's work has explanatory power within this context in so far as South Africa is integrated into MNC/ Information Age relations of production. An application of the Frankfurt School argument reveals that some sectors have been absorbed into the culture industry (eg. the majority of whites and Indians); some are in the process of being absorbed (eg. many of the emerging petit bourgeoisie amongst the black and coloured sectors); while others are, as yet, unintegrated (eg. rural blacks and coloureds; the significant numbers of the black and coloured working class). It is this latter category who retain the capacity to produce their own popular culture, and who represent the most radical sectors in society. But if the reformed Right and MNC-interests succeed in 'passifying' the struggle, it is conceivable that a post-apartheid culture industry could create a generalized mass culture in South Africa. What is clear is that this Frankfurt School work is seminally important in the

development of a realist paradigm understanding the Information Age, and the effects of media on the contemporary culture of any contexts where MNC relations of production have been implanted.

Capitalism, culture and co-option

The reason why the Frankfurt School originally turned to a study of the media was the same as that of other Leftists of their era (eg. Gramsci, and Lukacs). The School was concerned with trying to explain why leftist revolutions had not broken out throughout Europe (ie. why the Russian Revolution was isolated). To answer this their attention was drawn to media and ideology. They saw media and ideology as having the power to co-opt and 'de-revolutionize' the working class. Where they came to differ from Gramsci, however, was in their eventual conclusion that capitalism's ideological success represented a permanent defeat for European socialism. They may have over-stated the 'defeat' scenario. Yet, given the subsequent history of Europe and North America (one of a Keynesian 'co-option' and 'deflection' of socialism; Thatcher's, Reagan's and Kohl's 'maulling' of socialism during the 1980s; and the collapse of East European state socialism), perhaps neither can their ideas be that easily dismissed.

Furthermore, where capitalism has strong vested interests (ie. where 'capital' will offer real resistance), the Frankfurt School 'concerns' do need to be taken seriously by leftists. South Africa is one such instance. There is, in other words, a substantive difference between a Zimbabwe and a South Africa: South Africa is not marginal to MNC, and so real resistance (often in the form of 'co-option', 'deflection' and other ideological manipulation) is more likely to be encountered by the Left. This is what the reforms of 1990 represent. The Right is

confronted by a radicalized black working class which needs to be 'tamed'. South Africa has experienced such a 'taming'/co-opting process before.

The Frankfurt School's work goes a fair way toward explaining the co-optation of the white working class into racial-capitalism. This white (mostly Afrikaner) working class was a revolutionary anti-capitalist class in the early 1920s (the Communist Manifesto had even been translated into Afrikaans). In 1922 the Red flag was raised over Johannesburg by white miners, and the Smuts government had to mobilize the army and the air force to smash this Rand Revolt. Afrikaner Christian-Nationalist ideology was developed during the 1930s, in part, by the NP in response to the radicalization of Afrikaner workers by a socialist message (see O'Meara, 1983). At the time, the NP's leadership represented petit-bourgeois and agrarian capitalist interests with a deep-seated fear of a radical working class. The NP invested considerable energy into an ideological battle with the Left, using culture and media to 'win back' Afrikaner workers into the fold of 'the Volk' ('the People'). The NP waged this ideological struggle successfully: socialism was transformed into a national-socialism (with a strong resemblance to Nazism) (see O'Meara, 1983). Throughout the 1930s and 1940s sufficient Afrikaner workers were co-opted by the NP's culture industry to enable the NP to win the 1948 General Elections. The NP consolidated its co-option of the white working class during the 1950s and 1960s by creating an patronage network which economically 'rewarded' this working class for it support of racial-capitalism.

The School also helps us explain the direction the South African 'mainstream' media have taken, especially since the 1950s, in the

direction of a culture industry producing uncontroversial mass culture -- a process equally true of the black media (see Manoim, 1983; Tomaselli 1989:53-82; Tomaselli RE et al 1989:153-176).

The culture industry is seen as a 'mechanism' of 'subjective' control, where control is understood as a process of building legitimacy, alliances, making compromises, and using violence; all within specific objective conditions. In this way the School's work is transformed from something seemingly 'passive' into something of practical value. (This is especially the case with Marcuse's work, which is considerably easier to operationalize in South Africa). Because the Frankfurt School's work is something of a half-way house between Lukacs' pure theory and Gramsci's engagement with practical issues, their work offers a way to engage with practical cultural issues in a way that is theoretically sound (within a realist paradigm context) --ie. it offers a means to 'link' a reading and application of Lukacs to Gramsci. Lukacs' 'theoretical' and 'methodological' concerns remain apparent within the Frankfurt Schools' work on ideology. However, the School's work on the 'culture industry' and co-option points to a means of stepping beyond Lukacs' highly theoreticized concern with ideology, reification, etc. into a more 'nuts-and-bolts' unpicking of the workings of how culture and ideology have been 'industrialized'. Such an unpicking process offers a route into an unravelling of the how the 'culture industry' assists in the building of hegemony.

This 'realist' turn to a consideration of the culture industry in such a way that the material and subjective are understood as an interpenetrating 'totality' (process) is significant when considering the leftist struggle against apartheid, and since 1990s a reforming-

Right. It is a struggle that has to take account of capitalist (objective) and racist (subjective) domination, as well as repression in the form of violence, ideology, media manipulation, co-optive and compromise strategies, economic patronage, cross-class and/or-racial alliances, etc. A matter of concern is that decades of apartheid have created a subservience amongst certain sectors of the black population -- these sectors now regard themselves as 'lesser beings' to whites. (One might say they have been interpellated as 'kaffirs'). Overcoming this will require a leftist 'subjective' intervention in the future.

What the Frankfurt School 'totality' approach to the culture industry facilitates is thinking of resistance (and domination) in terms of a wide array of areas -- such as economics, politics, ideology, the media, co-option and alliances, etc. The School's approach, for example, offers an excellent theoretical starting point for an analysis of the South African state's WHAM approach. From the late 1970s until the end of 1989, the apartheid regime placed an amazing amount of energy into using the superstructures and ideology -- as indicated by both its WHAM and 'oil spots' strategies (Louw & Tomaselli, 1989; and Tomaselli & Louw, 1989c). WHAM was part of a generic Western cold war approach to co-opting 'troublesome' sectors of the population, but WHAM required a 'saleable' political message if co-option was to work. Until the 1990 reforms, the South African Right had no such message. The reforms create the possibility of the Right creating co-optive messages.

The School also offers a useful theoretical route of access for those seeking to understand the South African English-liberal and Afrikaans presses. These presses are centrally placed ideological

machines for the Right and MNC; a position they are likely to retain even after the first one-person-one-vote elections. But the School is of more than theoretical concern -- such understanding would be useful for anyone wishing to engage in public relations work for those leftist organizations wishing to counter the Right's ideological efforts.

So, although the notion of a culture industry may be seen as an overly-reified structuralism, it does have considerable explanatory (heuristic) power, which can be helpful in developing democratic challenges to MNC media. This is testified to by the continuing influence of the Frankfurt School over even those who have been critical of either the over-theoreticism or pessimism (or both) of the School's members. Examples would be: Enzensberger (1974), Hoffman (1983), Hund & Kirchhoff-Hund (1983) and Kreimeier (1983). Each has been unmistakably influenced by the School's notion of a 'culture industry' despite the fact that each of the above has, at some point, been critical of aspects of the Frankfurt School's work. There has also been a growing influence of this notion amongst leftist media analysts in the USA (See 'Ferment in the Field' special issue of Journal of Communication, Vol 33, No 3, 1983).

The School's influence amongst South African leftists (especially in the communication field) has been less pronounced, although their work has been taught at the CCSU/CCMS since 1986 (Tomaselli & Louw, 1989a). However, the more the South African Right learns to use the superstructural co-optive mechanisms associated with the 'liberal media' of MNC (a trend likely to be associated with the post-reform era), the greater will be the relevance of Frankfurt School work in the South African context.

The Frankfurt School's contribution to the notion of Ideology

The Frankfurt School notion of ideology is, in a sense, an 'extension' of Lukacs' Hegelian-Marxist interpretation. It derives from the same dialectical-totality interpretation of society that informed Lukacs. However, the School's work on ideology differs from Lukacs' in two significant ways. Firstly, whereas Lukacs' formulation was exclusively theoretical, the School's was more concretized -- ie. they examined the actual operaton of the American commercial media of the 1930s and 1940s: (A media which set the tone for the Information Age throughout the capitalist world in subsequent years). Secondly, Lukacs ultimately remained within the fold of Stalinist state socialism (and its associated technocratic logic) and retained a faith in the working class as being the only revolutionary agents. The Frankfurt School stepped outside of this narrow conception of opposing capitalism. In so doing they extended the conceptual range of a leftist understanding of ideology. It was an extension that made it possible for the left to also deal with fascism and Stalinism in a way that did not necessitate falling back on the narrow base-superstructure 'false consciousness' approach, or resorting to 'leadership cult' explanations. In a contemporary era the Frankfurt School could be useful in analyzing the swing to the Right in Eastern European societies.

From Horkheimer through to Habermas, 'ideology' is taken to mean the 'mystification' that results from a non-dialectical process. In this they, in effect, read the Platonic notion of dialectical argument (dialogue) into Marx's reading of Hegel's notion of dialectic -- ie. they accept Marx's idea of material dialectical contradictions in capitalism, which they extend to 'technocracy'(Adorno & Horkheimer,

1979:4). However, the School 're-appropriates' something of Hegel's notion of a 'subjective' dialectic. But they do this (in their totality method) without thereby 'losing' the materialist dialectic -- theirs is not a return to an unbridled Hegelian subjectivism. By retaining Marx's materialism, the School retains a historical specificity to their notion of a 'totality' dialectical process -- their's is not a universal dialectic (as in Hegel or Engels). This reading of Marx's, Hegel's and Plato's dialectic together ultimately produces a fascinating notion of communication/media in Habermas's idea of 'public sphere' -- which is a conception of a socialist (material) democratic (subjective) dialectical process within the specific historical material conjuncture of MNC technocracy. In short, it represents a recipe for building a leftist media able to assist in re-engaging the dialectic, and hence challenging the (exploitative and undemocratic) MNC technocratic ordering of society.

For the Frankfurt School, technocracy is a social process governed by the 'objective' (capital): the subjective has been overwhelmed by the objective -- ie. dialectical totality has been destroyed and replaced with technocratic ideology. The School members were pioneers in seeing the 'subjective' products of the capitalist mass media as 'a commodity' subject to the same 'objectifying' processes found in capitalism's material relations of production. The School concluded that the human condition has consequently been objectified and that this is the cause of human alienation. In expressing these ideas the School's members did not move substantially away from the core ideas formulated in the early Marx (1981) or Lukacs (1971).

The importance of the Frankfurt School notion of dialectical

totality is twofold. Firstly, they placed the (subjective) notion of democracy (as dialectical dialogue), and its relationship to the media, into leftist discourse. (Their work in this area is highly compatible with Gramsci's work on 'Councils' and with the Culturalist's concern with facilitating popular expression). It is to the discredit of those managing East European state socialism that they failed to respond to this leftist work. Had they done so, they might not have brought socialism into so much disrepute through their failure to pay attention to democratic practices. Secondly, they 'concretized' their (theoretical) notion of ideology by 'tying' it to material (ie. media) structures and practices (in a way that Lukacs never did). In this way they offered a 'bridge between Lukacs' theoretical approach to ideology and Gramsci's practical approach to ideology). By explicitly drawing out the links between the capitalist relations of production and the media the School added to the Hegelian-Marxist notion of ideology -- ie. they 'concretized' the notion and 'grounded' it in a specific examination of the capitalist mass media of the United States. Certainly reading together the work on ideology of the Frankfurt School, Lukacs and Gramsci provides a valuable means of developing a New Leftist approach to democratic socialist cultural production and to leftist media practice.

The Frankfurt School recognized that the nature of capitalism had changed between Marx's era and their own. A core feature of the capitalism they faced was the existence of the mass media. They saw these media as the instruments of capitalist ideology: this media disseminated the "false totality" (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1979:136) manufactured by the ideologies hired by capitalism. This was not a dialectical totality (ie. 'opposites within unity'), but an

undialectical and reified totality in which human subjectivity was 'deactivated'. These ideologues 'represented' an objectified (reified) totality -- ie. a totality dominated by capital (the objective) (see Marcuse, 1972:108). However, the media presented a view of society that disguised (mystified) the objectively-reified nature of capitalism: ie. the media presented a view of society in which 'the subjective' was seen as not being overwhelmed by 'the objective'. A subject-object totality was, in other words, manufactured by the media: a 'false totality' was constructed and promoted through the media. The media, hence, served to disguise (mystify) the objectifying and alienating (ie. de-subjectifying/de-humanizing) nature of capitalism.

In the South African racial-capitalist model, the success of such culture industry mystification has in part assumed a racial character: whites are more likely to 'accept' the 'false totality' presented to them in the media than are blacks. This is hardly surprising given that the 'de-humanization' of black South Africans by racial-capitalism has been largely 'hidden' from whites through Group Areas segregation. The media has presented a 'second-hand' reality for whites (generally located in the comfort of their technocratic suburbia) which has effectively shielded them from having to confront the 'objectifying' nature of racial-capitalism. However, despite this, one should not underestimate the extent to which an 'Americanized' South African media (culture industry) has moved South African urban blacks in a 'mass culture' direction. This is apparent in: music (Coplan, 1985); the print media -- eg. Zonk, Drum, Bona (see Manoim, 1983); the circulation of 'B-grade' American films as the staple fare on the black cinema circuit; three SABC-TV channels, namely TV2, TV3 and TV4;

Bophuthatswana TV; and the SABC's 'Radio Metro'.

On the negative side, there is a potential problem with the Lukacian-Frankfurt School notion of defining ideology as 'false totality'. The problem is that this could be taken to imply that an 'absolute' truth (ie. non-false totality) exists. Such a 'truth' could then be 'absolutised', reified and universalized, and worse still, imposed onto society by force. Both Merleau-Ponty (1973) and Kolakowski (1981) see Stalinist totalitarianism as having its origins in exactly such a Lukacs-type reification of dialectical truth.

However, this writer's reading of the Frankfurt School is that they avoided the reification of the notion of totality found, for example, in Lukacs. For the Frankfurt School, 'totality' was a **method** of understanding a process in which the media were centrally implicated, but where totality was not seen as a (reified) 'thing'. The School clearly understood the potential problem with the Lukacsian dialectic. Adorno (1978), for example, explicitly recognized the problem of reifying totality and eventually even refused to try and 'capture' an 'understanding' of totality. He preferred instead to concern himself with 'capturing' "fragments" from out of the 'potentially' contradictory totality that he saw as having now been overwhelmed by the 'existing' non-contradictory totality. Habermas' (1984) notion of 'totality' -- as something arrived at in a dialogical process -- specifically avoids any such reification. Habermas' work is, in fact, seminal with regard to developing a non-reified notion of totality as applied to the media. His work on the notion of a 'public sphere' is a direct outgrowth (with practical intent) of his particular interpretation of the dialectic. A progressive alternative media built in accordance with a Habermasian (dialectical) totality would

facilitate the process of 'democratic dialogue/dialectic' rather than facilitate an excuse for imposing a 'dialectical truth'. It is hence Habermas', rather than the Lukacs' dialectic, which, it is proposed, is most suitable as an underpinning for a South African leftist media (see Louw, 1990a).

Linked to their ideas on ideology, Frankfurt School formulated a critique of 'mass culture', also called "affirmative culture" (see Marcuse, 1972:88-133). The culture industry produced an affirmative culture by separating the mental from the manual (subject from object); (an idea which also formed the basis of Marx's notion of alienation). This separation makes possible the subjective critique of issues without having to deal with objective conditions. The resultant 'idealist' industry provides technocracy with a way of co-opting even the most critical of ideas without having to engage in any transformations 'on the ground' (see Marcuse, 1972:95). The result is a culture which affirms technocracy, and thereby blocks the process of change. This idea is not unlike Gramsci's notion of superstructural 'trenches' defending the objective relations of production. For the School, the 'mechanism' of change is blocked because the culture industry 'kills' the process of dialectical-totality -- ie. according to the School's members culture as a dialectical (ie. 'active' and 'contradictory') totality of subject and object had ceased to exist within the capitalist society which they found in the United States. Instead, the Frankfurt School identified a 'second-hand' culture (ie. mediated through the media) which was manipulated and undialectical: the subject-object link was destroyed, and in the place of totality was a one-sided 'objectified' culture (Marcuse, 1968). (Here we can see a

parallel to Lukacs' ideas on "reification"). These ideas echo in South Africa: one need only look at the operation of the South African public relations and advertising industry as well as at what Pinnock (1991) calls the 'guild press' for an illustration of the extent to which the (Americanized) culture industry has penetrated into South Africa. (Although it must be recognized that the penetration/influence of this industry into different sectors of the South African population varies from virtually total penetration amongst whites to very low penetration amongst the rural black sector). The Frankfurt School's ideas on this 'industry' and Gramsci's ideas on the role of traditional intellectuals overlap in this area.

For the School, the Americanized mass media was seen to operate according to the logic of capital (the objective). Culture was consequently 'objectified' -- or at any rate confirmed the technocratic (objective) ordering of society. Habermas (1980) saw this objectification as having been defused throughout the whole of Western society in the form of technocratic (or 'instrumental') ideology. Under P.W. Botha's regime this instrumental logic permeated deeply into NP thinking, and so began to significantly influence state planning. In terms of this thinking even 'civil unrest' could be 'managed' (technocratically) out of existence -- ie. the logic underpinning the 'oil spots' strategy of the NSMS (see Boraine, 1988; Jochelson, 1988; and Phillip, 1988).

Within the School's thinking the 'subjective' was seen to have been overwhelmed by the 'objective' and all that was left were pseudo individuals 'manufactured' by the (objectified) mass media. The diffusion of MNC/Information Age relations of production around the globe since the mid 1950s has served to incorporate greater and greater

numbers of people into this (Americanized) mass culture. Within this interpretation, the mass media serve merely to 'affirm' the uni-dimensional -- ie. objectified -- society. Human alienation as understood within Marxism (see Marx, 1981) was complete. Since they were dialecticians the Frankfurt School members regarded this 'death' of the dialectic as the death of civilization in the 'rationalist' sense of the word.

The Frankfurt School and South Africa

For South Africans during periods of intense struggle (eg. 1976-1989), the notion of a stilled dialectic may have seemed a little out of place. However, there is no reason to reject the Frankfurt School as a result. Their work does have explanatory power within the South African context if it is selectively 'appropriated':

Firstly, the School's method needs to be placed within a dialectical framework: ie. the notion of inertia and revolutionary breaks can be foregrounded within such a dialectical interpretation. In this way one can recognize that the dialectic can be stilled during some (historical material) periods and contexts and then re-activated again in other periods and contexts. For example, in 1990, in one part of the world-wide MNC system (eg. Spain) the dialectical process is presently 'stilled' (ironically by co-opting local socialists), while in another (eg. El Salvador) the dialectical process is 'active'. The reverse might be true in twenty years time. Such an interpretation points to the possibility that the Right and MNC-interests may still successfully 'still' the dialectic in South Africa through co-opting the struggle.

Secondly, the dialectic can be stilled for some sectors in society and not for others. For example, the School's ideas are potentially

valuable in explaining the world of the South African white petit bourgeoisie (an important group given their role as the pivotal support base for the Right). This class fraction has and does 'live' within an affirmative culture produced by a culture industry. In other words, it is a group confined within a narrow second-hand reality provided by the 'mainstream' media. (See, for example, the way in which broadcasting has generated 'consensus' in Tomaselli, R.E., 1989). This partly explains the extraordinary shift in this fraction's thinking from 1989 to 1990: in 1989 the ANC/SACP were the 'enemy'; in 1990 they were rehabilitated to the extent that Joe Slovo of the SACP could appear on an SABC religious talk show. The white petit bourgeoisie generally simply followed the lead of the media. For this class fraction the dialectic is 'killed', and a conservative inertia is the result. Further, if white attitudes are, in part, the outcome of being 'trapped' within a narrowed-down second-hand 'reality' created by the culture industry, then the Frankfurt School conclusions have profound implications for the South African left. It means one of the keys to defeating the Right may be to 'break through' the 'ideological prison' of the (white) culture industry so as to present to this sector another vision of their society. This is a role the Institute for a Democratic Alternative in South Africa (Idasa) set itself. As long as one does not universalize a Frankfurt School reading of this white petit bourgeois phenomenon to cover the South African situation <u>in toto</u>, the School's work has value to a leftist praxis, especially if read with Gramsci's work on organic intellectuals.

Habermas (1979; 1984), as the heir to the Frankfurt School, has developed most coherently (at least in theoretical terms) the

dialectical notion of communication as the basis for a democratic and socialist social order. It now remains for leftist media workers to translate this theory into practice. From a Frankfurt School perspective a media built to facilitate a social dialogue (i.e. a 'public sphere') would activate popular culture -- 'popular culture' being the antithesis of 'mass culture'. This is the area where the School's work overlaps with that of culturalists such as Raymond Williams and E.P. Thompson.

From the Frankfurt School's dialectical interpretation of culture, in fact, sprang a definition of 'high' and 'low' culture. Modern (Western) 'mass culture' was defined as low culture. It was a culture which was 'undynamic' (undialectical). The 'masses' were passive recipients: they received a manipulated 'culture' through the mass media. Adorno saw the production of this 'mass culture' as due to the fact that although the bourgeoisie controlled the culture industry, they no longer represented a progressive force in history. Adorno identified 'high culture' with the culture produced when the bourgeoisie were still a progressive (revolutionary) social force. At that time (the late 18th and 19th Century) bourgeois culture was dialectical (i.e. organically active). For Adorno, the bourgeoisie had however, become a moribund status quo: it was now in their interests to block any further revolutionary (dialectical) change in society since this would overthrow bourgeois civilization. The bourgeoisie's mass media (radio, films, music, advertising and newspapers) was seen to bear testimony to their cultural decay: modern 'low culture' is defined as undialectical (i.e. objectified; uni-directional (coming from the bourgeois ruling elite); manipulative; and possessing a 'sameness' (a standardized average uniformity). The 'masses' are seen

as being kept inactive through being 'distracted' by this laid-on 'culture' and leisure, which then manufactures a pseudo-individuality and pseudo-choice.

This Adorno-derived interpretation of culture is not as incompatible with the culturalist's view on popular culture as it may at first appear. This can be demonstrated by applying a Frankfurt School-type definition of high and low culture to South Africa.

In the South African context one could interpret the local culture industry as consisting of the 'guild press' (and associated magazines); SABC; SABC-TV; Ster-Kinekor and Nu Metro; the video-network; and the Performing Arts Councils (PACs). This is an industry which is primarily targeted at the white petit bourgeoisies -- a class who represent a moribund and conservatively-defensive culture within the South African context. Not surprisingly therefore -- from a Frankfurt School perspective -- this group 'lives' within a second-hand reality frequently imported from 'Hollywood', or comprised of Hollywood-imitations (Tomaselli, 1988a:83). Hence the culture industry serving this group in no way reflects the 'cutting edge' of contemporary South African culture (see Louw, 1989b). As an industry serving an undialectical (and moribund) culture it conforms to the School's definition of 'mass' or 'affirmative' culture. In South African terms, this 'mass culture' is not universal. (Indeed, a fault with the Frankfurt School members is that they generalized 'mass culture', whereas it seems unlikely that it was never a universal phenomenon even in the United States). However, their notion of 'mass culture' does seem to have explanatory value in explaining the 'conservatism' of some sectors in South Africa, such as the white and Indian middle and

working classes. In general, these sectors do appear to have been 'pulled into' Western 'mass culture'. What is more, the South African Right; and MNC Powers (UK, USA and Germany) are clearly interested in applying a co-optive programme to South Africa -- a programme aimed at incorporating further sectors (eg. the black middle class and the coloured middle and working class) into this mass technocratic culture. The Western powers and internal Right (and the media serving this sector) will clearly aim to try and maneuver a post-apartheid South Africa in this direction.

Knowledge of Frankfurt School theory can serve as a 'theoretical' bulwark against the co-option of a post-apartheid media tied into MNC/Information Age mass culture. It also benefits leftist media workers because: firstly, it would, enable them to recognize any co-optive pressures pushing the leftist media in a 'mass' (as opposed to popular) direction; and secondly, enable them to act as 'early-warning systems' of co-option strategies within the Left.

However, care needs to be taken when applying the Frankfurt School to South Africa. Certainly South Africa has a 'culture industry'. But this society also has, PARALLEL to this undialectical and conservative 'culture industry', an active (dialectical) popular culture. The notion of 'parallel' cultures allows one to read the Frankfurt School and the Culturalists simultaneously into the South African situation). It is the popular culture (largely a black South African phenomenon) which potentially represents the cutting edge of any leftist hegemony -- ie. black South Africans are (at present) less 'massified', and from a popular ('organic') point of view, more active. (In fact, given the substantial poverty amongst blacks, the popular cultural 'activity' amongst this sector is surprisingly high). Using Adorno's logic, this

popular culture in no ways represents a mass culture. Rather, as an outgrowth of those forces representing dialectical transformation in South Africa. This black popular culture parallels (in the South African context) the culture of the bourgeoisie in late 18th and 19th century Europe/America: ie. it is a progressive force.

Application of the above (Adorno-derived) understanding could serve to direct the leftist media into yet another role -- that of facilitating a quickened pace of popular cultural development. In such media work a knowledge of Frankfurt School theory would be valuable. The School, in other words provides a theoretical 'touchstone' -- an understanding of what an 'anti-progressive' culture looks like; and therefore what kind of culture/communication should be consciously avoided.

Problems with the Frankfurt School

For a New Leftist communicology concerned with practical emancipatory possibilities, the most serious problem with the Frankfurt School is that (like Lukacs) much of their work remains at the level of passive reflection. This criticism, however, does not devalue the importance of this theory as a foundation (together with Lukacs) for developing a realist approach to communication, the (commercial) media, and co-optation.

A key concern is that the pessimism of the Frankfurt School undermines the School's own dialectical radical premises (see Chasin & Chasin, 1974). Adorno, for example, seemed to give up all hope that the dialectic could ever be 're-awakened'. In terms of media analysis, we can now trace the origins of this 'problem' in the Frankfurt School to:

(a) their over-estimation of the power of the media. (This is especially problematical in a Third World context); and
(b) their over-emphasis of the importance of the media (superstructures) within the total social process. (Also problematic in many Third World contexts) ;
(c) their ignoring of the possibility of 'resistance' surviving within the 'gaps', 'cracks' and 'contradictions' of society;
(d) they ignored the fact that popular culture had survived; and
(e) their assumption that the 'culture industry' was a monolithic 'entity'; ie. this view is only possible if contradictions internal to the media industry are ignored.

Both theoretical and empirical objections have been raised to the Frankfurt School. The political-economist media analyst Freiberg (1981:15) objected to their notion of a "general cretinization of the population". Freiberg's analysis of the situation in France contradicted the School's ideas by revealing a 'dual' media system, in which the ruling elite provides for itself a 'non-cretinized' media, while the 'mass' media (with its 'culture industry' type 'cretinization' and 'massification' format) were reserved for the rest of society. Amongst the ways the masses are excluded from the 'non-cretinized' media are: (a) financial limitations; and (b) they are not 'taught' (for example at working class schools) to 'appreciate' the arts etc. In South Africa, the way in which education (and to a lesser extent, media) has been provided for different racial and class sectors on a differential basis is a striking example of this.

Corrigan & Willis went even further in their criticism of the Frankfurt School. They objected to the very idea of a cretinized "acted upon and passive" (Corrigan & Willis, 1980:304) mass:

"Controllers know that the controlled are not a passive mass; ideologists can make the society only from their greater distance" (Corrigan & Willis, 1980:305).

From an historical material perspective the Frankfurt School made one unforgivable error: they generalized an historically and materially specific (synchronic) set of conditions, when they treated the USA's mass media as a universal system rather than as a transitory historical-material condition. It is true that this US mass media has had remarkable 'staying' power (indeed 'expansionary' power). However, that is still no reason to assume the system is not finite. This is an area where Gramsci differs from the School -- Gramsci provides a more complex understanding because he deals in depth with a particular historical material instance (Italy between the World Wars). Gramsci did not make the 'error' of generalizing his work into a 'universal'-type theory in the way the Frankfurt School and Lukacs attempted to do. A generalizing theory can be useful, but only within limits. The School's work needs to be read with Gramsci's to counterbalance the tendency toward developing overly-universalized models and theories. Nicholas Garnham (1979:131) states in this regard: "The real weakness of the Frankfurt School's original position was ... insufficiently to take account of the economically contradictory nature of the process they observed and thus to see industrialization as unproblematic and irresistible". This problem becomes particularly acute when applied to situations where contradictions, and a fluidity (including in the superstructures) are apparent (eg. contemporary Central America). The failure to consider the possibility of future contradictions led the Frankfurt School (with the possible exception of Benjamin) into a

theoretical passivity: they offered only critique, with no glimpse of praxis. They offered no practical alternative (no alternative outside of intellectualizing) to the culture industry. From the perspective of trying to create a leftist media in South Africa this position becomes too limiting. Ironically then, the Frankfurt School members, by ignoring their own dialectical premises and through not seeking out potential media contradictions, violated the one valuable contribution they could make to a leftist communication; namely their dialectical (Hegelian) theory of communication. In fact, they went so far as to (in conservative fashion) implicitly criticize the new forms of media and culture then being developed, instead of seeking out the potentially progressive features of such media. Enzensberger (1974:14 says of this particular failure: "Criticism of the mind industry which fails to recognize its central ambiguities is either idle or dangerous". However, despite Enzensberger's criticism, it must be noted that his work has been strongly influenced by the Frankfurt School. Enzensberger's 'consciousness industry' is merely an extension of the School's 'culture industry'. The fact that Enzensberger is able to develop essentially Frankfurt School ideas into a 'praxis' direction is a clear indication that the School's work should not be entirely dismissed due to its apparent over-theoretical nature.

The view of the masses as absolutely passive and manipulable contradicts and undermines a core feature of the leftist project. If the Frankfurt School's pessimism is accepted then the whole basis for attempting to construct a leftist media is negated. Hence, even if the School is acknowledged as having made a seminal contribution to a leftist communicology (both theoretically and through their turn to media analysis), there is a definite need to move beyond their

pessimism, under-estimation of the possibilities of resistance, and over-theoreticism. This is especially true for those attempting to build a South African leftist media.

Ironically though, the Frankfurt School's 'errors' in this regard are part of their potential value: their work demonstrates a potential 'wrong turn' which is so easy to make. To avoid this 'wrong turn' CCS could read into the School's theory a deeper concern with seeking out contradictions (eg. Lukacs' dialectical method and Benjamin/ Enzensberger's approach), as well as developing a Gramscian reading of the notion of 'culture industry'. In the South African context this would entail moving beyond the conception of a monolithic (Frankfurt School-type) notion of culture industry into a recognition of contradictions within the 'industry', and of 'culture' outside of this culture industry. At the same time, this is no reason to abandon the notion of a culture industry -- it too exists. What is more, in the post-1990 reforms era it could well expand its influence in South Africa. It therefore seems useful to see the School's work as having much explanatory power, but not a universal explanatory power.

Salvaging aspects of the Frankfurt School's work

The School's view that the dialectic was 'dead' and their pessimism about (undialectical) 'mass culture' needs to be seen against the historical materialist backdrop of Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia and the Frankfurt School's encounter with the United States' 'unrevolutionary' proletariat. The School tried to understand these phenomena from a Marxist perspective. Their pessimism resulted from the fact that they were (humanist) Marxists, who had seen (a) fascism triumph over socialism in Germany; (b) the deformation of socialism in

the Soviet Union; and (c) the working class in the USA largely 'passified' by the mass media/mass culture. For leftists faced with these conditions, optimism could well be seen as inappropriate. The School encountered these phenomena and found economistic historical materialism unable to explain them satisfactorily. It was for this reason that they turned to an analysis of the superstructures and culture to seek out a reason for what they perceived to be the 'stabilization' of 'objectified' (undialectical) society.

Further, the School's over-estimation of the media's power is something they shared with positivist media theory contemporaries (eg. Blumler, 1939). The problem with such a view is that it assumes a uni-directional communication flow in which the communicator/medium have all the power -- ie. it sees the recipients ('masses') as wholly 'manipulable' and passive: they are not understood as active participants or active co-creators of meaning. It should be noted that even positivist media analysts have subsequently dropped this notion that the media possess overwhelming power (see Blumler & Katz, 1974). The point is that members of the Frankfurt School were amongst the earliest media analysts, and it is easy to criticize them with hindsight, and on the basis of our contemporary understanding of the communication process, just as one can criticize the early positivists.

Ironically, to dismiss the Frankfurt school <u>in toto</u> would be to fall prey to the same sort of 'universalizing' error this School's members made. Would it not be more useful to recognize that perhaps their understanding of the media is both correct and incorrect depending on the historical material context? In other words, periods of passivity (inertia?) do occur when the dialectic is stilled; and in certain of

these periods the culture industry does play a significant anti-dialectical role. Further, perhaps it is necessary to concede that the Frankfurt School's ideas may be valuable with regard to understanding how the media can 'passify' and 'co-opt' the middle classes as a specific (and demographically important) sector within capitalism (including within South Africa's racial capitalism); but may be less successful when applied to other sectors of society. So, within the South African context, for example, it is useful to read the Frankfurt School's ideas into the situation both in terms of (a) periodization, and (b) class analysis. In this regard it may prove useful to know which sectors of South African society (classes, class fractions, etc) have, or have not been, 'co-opted' or 'passified' or even 'cretinized' in any particular period. This could help the left strategize more effectively.

Despite all the problems with the Frankfurt School, the notion of co-option, which derives from their work on the culture industry, is particularly important. This is not least in South Africa, where co-option has been, and is, a problem in certain sectors; and in the post-reform period will, in all probability become a much bigger problem. The media can, and do, play a hegemonic role in:

(a) assisting in the co-option of certain strata into the service of the status quo. The NP government (and its Namibian allies), for example, waged an especially effective Namibian campaign in 1989, thereby helping rightist parties to win over 40% of the of the vote in the elections for a constituent assembly.

(b) 'deflecting' and 'nullifying' (or even incorporating in 'modified' format) potentially oppositional 'ideas'. For example, the terms 'non-racial' and 'community' are being increasingly co-opted by the South

African Right. It is certain that MNC-interests will pour funds into South Africa to assist such 'deflection' and 'co-option' programmes;
(c) creating 'pseudo choice' and 'pseudo individuality' (hence helping to legitimate a so-called 'democracy' and consumerism). Within South Africa, American television programmes in particular are having an influence in this regard in the expanding (cross-racial) middle class sector;
(d) helping to 'counter' contradictions that emerge within the total social process. For example, between 1976 and 1989 the media was frequently used to deflect the white sector's attention away from poor economic performance and their resultant declining income, because this would have undermined their support for the NP government; and
(e) possibly even helping to pacify potential opposition. For example, if one appears unbeatable, resistance is discouraged.

More importantly, when appraising the value of the Frankfurt School, is that at least three major theorists -- namely Benjamin, Marcuse and Habermas -- cannot be classified as having fallen prey to the same pessimistic and theoretically 'passive' approach. If the rest (and especially Adorno) are problematic for a leftist communicology, the same cannot necessarily be said of these three. So even if doubts exist about the usefulness of the rest of the School for praxis-oriented media workers, there can be no doubt that these three can be useful in the development of a leftist communication theory and practice.

Walter Benjamin (1977), for example, considered the potential value of the new media technology for praxis. His examination of how the modern media facilitation of mass 'reproducability' (Benjamin,

1977:388-392) has 'liberatory' potential (from a democratic socialist perspective) is a seminal insight for leftist media studies. Benjamin was also amongst the first media analysts to stress the importance of the recipients as co-producers of meaning (Benjamin, 1977:394, 398). He also stressed the way in which modern mass media make this possible (i.e are potentially anti-elitist) -- key insights for the development of a democratic socialist 'public sphere'. It is hardly surprising then that the radical media theorist, Enzensberger, chose Benjamin as a key source of ideas. Such notions, as developed by Benjamin (and Enzensberger), have already shown their usefulness in South Africa where the leftist media have successfully sought out and used the latest media technology (see Pinnock; and CECS Manuals, n/d).

Further, Benjamin refused to sink into pessimism because of an ascendant petit bourgeoisie (who largely staff the culture industry) and a simultaneous decline of working class influence in Europe/ America. Here Benjamin differed significantly from his other Frankfurt contemporaries: instead of bemoaning the failures of the working class, Benjamin instead sought the revolutionary possibilities inherent in this changing situation. Benjamin developed an idea of intellectual (petit bourgeois) 'interventionism' (based upon critical theory seen as a sort of hermeneutic/interpretive activity) as one potential sort of radical praxis (Roberts, 1982:153-225). This particular notion has a great deal of potential value in South Africa where skills are overwhelmingly concentrated in 'non-black' middle class hands. In this area Benjamin provides a useful conceptual framework within which leftist media workers can move beyond an exclusivist working class understanding of 'the struggle', and so work out and develop precisely what their own white collar/middle class contribution to 'the struggle'

could be. Developing an understanding of the role of the petit bourgeoisie in 'the struggle' requires attention -- one need only refer to the positive influence of petit bourgeois-initiated projects like Work in Progress and South African Labour Bulletin to realize the potential value of such a Benjamin-type praxis. A rigorous consideration (based on Benjamin's approach) of the radical petit bourgeois contribution to the struggle is important for both leftist media work and for the wider Left.

Herbert Marcuse's work represents an important link between the Frankfurt School's approach and the praxis-oriented CCS approach being sought in this thesis. While Marcuse's contemporaries within the School sank ever deeper into pessimism during the 1950s and 1960s, Marcuse turned the School's approach toward the search for praxis and revolutionary optimism. In this role Marcuse became an important 'organic intellectual'/spokesperson of the 1960s-1970s New Left Movement. In this role he made an especially interesting contribution to the search for a way to 'unfreeze the dialectic' (Marcuse, 1968, 1969 and 1972).

Marcuse's approach to praxis involved breaking out of the confines of workerist struggle and seeking instead a way to 'activate' ALL those alienated by technocratic capitalism (including, for example, students from the middle classes). This involved, in part, communicative/ cultural work -- a sort of social psychotherapy, in which subjects were forced to confront their alienation and its causes (capitalist-technocracy). It is the sort of work in which a progressive-alternative media will have a central role to play. Marcuse re-awakened the 'utopian' possibility of a de-alienated and de-

technocratized world (of democracy, individual freedom and human-nature harmony). Habermas has picked up on these Marcusian ideas in a theoretical sense, while the Greens Movement developed them in a more practical sense during the 1980s. Although, at first glance, this approach may appear out of place in South Africa, it should be noted that it is potentially valuable in at least one (not insignificant) sector of the local struggle -- namely, the student population of the liberal campuses. In the process of examining the Freudian-Marxist interface, Marcuse directed the dialectical method in the direction of a notion of liberation and praxis (Rauche, 1977), although primarily in an Euro-American context. However, Marcuse's notion that it would be those not integrated into capitalist structures who would be most 'free' to act against this system has shown itself to have some validity in South Africa: it is worth noting that the unemployed and the youth took the lead in opposing apartheid between 1976 and 1989; while employed black people (ie. the parents of the youth) often 'held themselves back' for fear of losing their jobs.

For leftist media workers this Marcusian observation has certain implications -- it means developing media targeted specifically at these 'non-integrated' sectors (youth, students, unemployed) [3]. But that presents certain economic problems because it is precisely these sectors for whom media needs to be provided free -- and that means finding funding. It also presents a problem of style -- these sectors have very specific interests and world views which 'outsiders' may have difficulty in expressing. This means that ideally these groups need to produce their own media -- a position the culturalists would endorse. However, this requires that they be trained to do so. What Marcuse draws attention to is the realization that a counter to the culture

industry needs to be developed -- a leftist communicative/ culture apparatus which can serve to mobilize alienated sectors on their own terms. Such a mobilization, through what Habermas would term a 'public sphere', could represent a serious challenge to technocratic-capitalism in South Africa and elsewhere.

Habermas, has in fact, developed Marcuse's ideas on a 'communication praxis' (Louw, 1983). In so doing, Habermas moved the Frankfurt approach still further away from the pessimism of the later Adorno. In many respects Habermas' theoretical work represents a marriage of the sort of concepts found in Gramsci and Marcuse. The result is a notion of actively building a counter-hegemony using communicative (superstructural) action to do so. His work on the 'public sphere' and a 'reconstructed historical materialism' is central in this regard. It is work which, because it has been de-pessimized, facilitates the integration of the School's method into a praxis-oriented leftist communicology. His notion of the 'public sphere', and his proposal for a 'reconstructed historical materialism' are especially significant -- he draws attention to the important role of communication (public sphere) within praxis; and develops a theoretical/methodological fulcrum (reconstructed historical materialism) for a leftist turn to media work.

What is useful for a leftist media is Habermas' work on the 'public sphere'/social dialogue. Currently, not all the South African alternative press is constructed as a democratic 'public sphere'. Were this to be consciously done the long-term prospects for developing a democratic post-apartheid South Africa would be improved. Habermas, in fact, offers a theoretical model upon which to construct a popular-

democratic leftist media system: a system which could serve to generate a participative and democratic culture.

This is not to say that Habermas has not reproduced some of the problems (that I have already discussed) that are found in the other Frankfurt School writer. There are some problems with his work, especially from a South African perspective, as discussed elsewhere by this author (Louw, 1982:126-130). However, despite these, it has to be noted that Habermas has not replicated the School's pessimism and theoretical passivity. Further, Habermas has been in the forefront of defending historical materialism (and its rationalist and socialist project) from the contemporary post-modernist and post-structuralist attacks on it. This has, in a sense, served to demonstrate the continued importance of the Frankfurt School as a source of historical materialist communication theory. In fact, it is significant that it is Habermas (working out of the Frankfurt School tradition) who made the important challenge that historical materialism be 'reconstructed' (Habermas, 1979: Chapter 3), such that this paradigm is more adequately able to deal with the contemporary Information Age.

Gramsci's practically-oriented concern with the superstructures

Unlike the Frankfurt School theorists, Antonio Gramsci was never a Marxist 'dissident'. Explicitly a Marxist-Leninist, he argued for a vanguardism instead of 'waiting' for the revolution. (He argued against Second International Marxists who believed that capitalism would collapse because of its own contradictions). Despite his Leninism, he significantly reconstructed historical materialism in a way which makes his work valuable in the contemporary Information Age, as well as being highly compatible with a New Leftist interpretation of praxis. The

'inherent' New Leftism in his ideas is apparent in the clear influence he had on Eurocommunism in the 1970s. (It is perhaps not surprising to find that the Italian Communist Party -- which Gramsci helped to found -- was a key pioneering force in the Eurocommunist revision of leftist praxis). Because of his practical political work Gramsci recognized the need for: (a) the working class to develop alliances and coalitions with other classes (for Gramsci the peasantry was especially important), and (b) for socialist politicans to look after interests of both the working class AND those of other classes.

What is interesting is that Gramsci actually engaged in his de facto reconstruction and revision of historical materialism at the height of the Stalinist period. It seems probable that the only reason his work was not branded as 'anti-Marxist' and henceforth purged from Marxist discourse was because he was in a fascist prison while engaged in this revisionist work! This made him a martyr, and so placed his work beyond the reach of Stalinist orthodoxy's tendency of attempting to obliterate creative revisions to the paradigm.

Before being imprisoned by Mussolini's government Gramsci was a member of the Italian Parliament and leader of the Italian Communist Party. He had been concerned with developing a factory council movement to establish a mass base for Italian socialism (Gramsci, 1971: xxxviii). His work in this area made Gramsci sensitive to the notion of grassroots democracy (eg. each factory as a democratic unit). This non top-down (vanguardist) approach made Gramsci recognize the role of 'superstructural labour' in the task of building a hegemony from the grassroots up. One can see Gramsci's 'theoretical hand' in the work of South Africa's Cosatu. (In fact, since Bozzoli (1981) introduced Gramsci's work to South Africa, the impact of his work has grown

increasingly apparent).

In prison (from 1926 to 1937) Gramsci turned his hand to leftist theoretical work. The result was his Prison Notebooks (1971) (parts of which only began to be published after the Second World War). Because these take the form of notes written in prison conditions, it is difficult to provide a coherent summary from this work. But at heart it was concerned with an examination of the role intellectuals have within political struggle, and in constructing civil society. The outcome was a series of seminal leftist insights into superstructural labour. What is more, as capitalism has mutated in the direction of increasingly 'superstructural' relations of production, so have Gramsci's insights become increasingly relevant to leftist praxis within an Information Age.

Gramsci's work has influenced attempts to move historical materialism away from economism and toward a concern with the superstructure(s). However, because he was a Marxist practitioner, rather than a Marxist theorist, Gramsci's approach to 'reconstructing' historical materialism took a form different to that associated with the other theoretical reconstructions discussed in this thesis. Gramsci directs historical materialists to use the superstructures for practical hegemonic competition between the Left and Right.

But Gramsci's work does have certain similarities to the Frankfurt School. This is not really surprising since both he and the School's members were living in contexts in which the Far-Right (ie. fascists and Nazis) were gaining ascendancy. The similarities between Gramsci and the Frankfurt School were: firstly, a concern with explaining why the contradictions in capital (as identified by Marx) had not produced

the expected revolution in Europe. Gramsci described how "passive revolutions" co-opted the working class into Rightist social arrangements. (An example was the fascist passive revolution in Italy and the Nazi passive revolution in Germany, which co-opted significant sections of the working class). This work has potential explanatory power for the analysis of certain Third World comprador relationships. Secondly, both Gramsci and the Frankfurt School theorists turned to the superstructures (and away from economism) to try and explain the above problem. Thirdly, neither the Frankfurt School theorists, nor Gramsci's turn to the superstructures (the subjective) caused them to abandon historical material (objective) premises.

Gramsci's revision of historical materialism integrated a concern with the superstructures by 'intuitively' using a 'totality' approach. Unlike the Frankfurt School members and Lukacs, however, Gramsci did not really delve theoretically into the intricacies of the subject-object problematic. But his work exhibits the same humanist-leftist (subject-object dialectic) premises: Gramsci is clearly an historical materialist concerned with the subjective. Hence in Gramsci (1971:3-4) we find references to the class (objective) - intellectual (subjective) relationship; the class (objective) - politics (subjective) relationship (Gramsci, 1971:227-8); and reference to class and hegemony (Gramsci, 1971:210): i.e. the subject-object (superstructure-base) problematic is being dealt with.

In Gramsci the above issues are examined through concrete Italian examples, rather than through a 'theoretical' investigation. That Gramsci uses Italian examples has, in itself, a certain added value for South African leftists. This is because there are some rather remarkable similarities between Gramsci's Italian context and South

African conditions; eg. clear 'developed' and 'underdeveloped' sectors; and extremes of 'interests' which results in a plethora of organized political interest groups ranging from extreme right to extreme left. Such a situation lends the edge to those most successful at managing 'alliance-type' politics. It is not surprising therefore that Gramsci's ideas have found particular application in situations requiring the building of leftist-alliances (eg. the Italian, French and Spanish Eurocommunists of of the 1970s; Chile during both the Allende era, and again in the late 1980s; Nicaragua during the Sandanista struggle; and South Africa in the 1980s).

The Prison Notebooks exudes Gramsci's intuitive 'feel' for practical leftist politics. Hence although there are many similarities between Gramsci's 'superstructural revision' of historical materialism and the 'revisions' of Lukacs, Adorno, Habermas and Althusser, Gramsci's work has a more 'concrete' texture than the rather 'distant' academicism of the others.

Gramsci's 'unacademic' approach is both a strength and a weakness. From a praxis point of view it is a strength, and so it is hardly surprising to find that South African 'left' political practitioners find Gramsci especially appealing. From an analytical point of view, however, Gramsci failed to 'spell out' his methodology. In itself this is not necessarily serious. Further, since we can identify both he and Lukacs as applying the 'totality method' we can always refer to Lukacs for guidance on methodological rigour in this approach if we so wish. (Lukacs and Gramsci share many similarities: both were Leninist-Marxists, working between the two world wars, who recognized the limitations of the Marxist orthodoxy of their day. Like Gramsci, Lukacs

attempted to shift Marxism beyond this narrow orthodoxy while remaining a Leninist). However, Gramsci's 'intuitive' rather than 'rigorous' approach to the totality method did result in him concentrating almost exclusively on the superstructures such that he did not deal with the way in which the superstructures are 'connected' to the economic-base. Lukacs left no such methodological holes.

Specifically, Gramsci concentrated on two superstructures: (a) the ideological, and (b) the political and legal. Gramsci's work is thus valuable in situations of political (superstructural) struggle. (The South African struggle has been such an overtly 'political' engagement because apartheid has been such an 'apparently' political, legal and ideological phenomenon).

Gramsci explicitly directs the Left towards political/ideological engagement with the Right, which represents a significant shift away from the economistic historical materialist interpretation of struggle. It is a shift that directs the Left towards a concern for communicative engagement -- the implication of Gramsci's ideas is that building hegemony is communicative work par excellance. So it is a little surprising that, unlike the Frankfurt School, Gramsci does not deal specifically with the media as a communication phenomenon. This is made more surprising given that Gramsci had a hand in founding an Italian socialist newspaper to create a voice for the factory council movement. Its founding was, in fact, a prelude to the establishment of the Italian Communist Party. But even if he does not deal with the media per se, the implications of his ideas for leftist media workers is clear: for Gramsci media workers are but one category of intellectual.

In the Italian context, Gramsci turned to the superstructures out of

his concern with intellectuals and their role in either helping to generate a leftist revolution, or in aiding the status quo to prevent a revolution. For leftist communicology this work is extremely important: in much the way that the Frankfurt School theorists were pioneers of a leftist approach to the media ('culture industry'), so Gramsci was a pioneer of a leftist approach to intellectuals.

Gramsci saw the superstructures as a site of struggle: as an area where the contradictions of capitalism could be either (a) manifested, or (b) 'papered over'. Through linking superstructural workers (intellectuals) to the notion of struggle Gramsci made his seminal contribution to the reconstruction of historical materialism. In the Gramscian approach, part of the task of a Left revolutionary party (which Gramsci called "the Modern Prince") is to help make social contradictions manifest. For Gramsci this would specifically include superstructural labour. The work of Rightist intellectuals on the other hand is to try and 'paper over', 'camouflage' or 'deflect' these contradictions. The latter would, in part, co-incide with the labour of those in what the Frankfurt School called the culture industry. Thus according to Gramsci, intellectuals (such as journalists, teachers, academics, etc) were thus centrally implicated as playing an important part in the direction society took. To apply Lukacsian-Frankfurt School logic to the Gramscian approach: Rightist intellectuals would be trying to either 'still' the dialectic, or at least 'deflect' it in favour of a maintenance of the status quo; while leftist intellectuals would be trying to 'encourage' dialectical contradictions.

For Gramsci, intellectuals organized the beliefs of society. These

ideas had a material force in history (ie. ideas are part of the dialectical totality). Gramsci identified two types of intellectual in Italy: "organic" and "traditional" [4]. Traditional intellectuals were those who held themselves aloof from contemporary struggles, remaining detached and merely pontificating on 'ideals' (ie. the traditional 'ivory tower' approach). Organic intellectuals, on the other hand, grew 'organically' from the ranks of the different classes in society. (For Gramsci, only the peasants produced no organic intellectuals of their own). Because these intellectuals were organically a part of these different classes, they automatically became implicated (involved) in any struggles between them -- ie intellectuals produced ideas and knowledge which helped to further the interests of the class to which they belonged.

Because of the nature of capitalist society, the Right could rely on the services of large numbers of organic intellectuals -- ie. the 'establishment' would clearly have the necessary resources to employ intellectuals (eg. advertising, public relations, journalists, researchers, academics, teachers, etc). Such employment co-incides with the Frankfurt School's notion of 'culture industry'. It was the role of these (Rightist) intellectuals (ie. within the culture industry) to organize "civil society" -- ie. to 'produce' consent and/or legitimate the status quo. There is some overlap between Gramsci's work on intellectuals and Althusser's work on Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). However, in Gramsci's writing intellectuals are 'freer agents' -- ie. able to choose to act for a particular class interest (ie. not imprisoned within a 'linguistic' structure as in the Althusserian model). Clearly Gramsci saw 'choice' as available, otherwise he would not have seen the possibility of the Left co-opting

Rightist intellectuals and visa versa. Gramsci noted that one of the tasks of organic intellectuals working for the established order was to attempt to co-opt oppositional forces. The way in which the petit bourgeois-dominated fascist movements co-opted the working class in Italy and Germany between the two World Wars was a case in point. (The Afrikaans petit bourgeoisie co-opted the South African white working class in a similar way during the 1940s and 1950s)(see O'Meara, 1983).

Gramsci described the successful Rightist co-optation of oppositional forces as a "passive revolution" or reformism. His ideas are likely to prove useful for leftist analysis in the post-1990 South African context where Rightist intellectuals will attempt to co-opt sections of the Left.

Gramsci argued that the working class needed to develop its own "organic intellectuals". The Left in Gramsci's Italy would have had a similar problem to the Left in contemporary South Africa, namely: the ruling hegemony would have an abundant supply of intellectual 'material' (through its control of resources and the sites of intellectual production), while the Left would face a paucity of such 'material'. In both Gramsci's Italy and contemporary South Africa the challenge for the Left becomes an attempt to accumulate intellectual 'capital'. This requires creating intellectual sites, training intellectuals and trying to co-opt former rightist intellectuals into leftist structures. South African examples of such work have been: the creation of a left-wing media (see Chapter 5); media training schemes (see Mackay & Louw, 1990); and the 'capturing' of the University of the Western Cape. Within Gramscian logic such an accumulation of intellectual capital was needed to meet the challenge of the ruling

hegemony's 'culture industry'. The task of the (accumulated) leftist organic intellectuals would be to counter the work of the Right's intellectuals, and to organize a 'counter' set of beliefs, and/or counter-civil society.

Some of the earliest accumulation of leftist intellectual capital in South Africa was achieved by the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) during the 1970s. BC was a process which acted as a sort of 'primitive accumulation' of 'intellectual capital' (which gradually shifted towards a working class position). Significantly, it was during this BC-phase that the foundations were consciously laid for a counter-hegemony in the form of a progressive-alternative media and 'alternative journalism' in South Africa. Certainly the 'Charterists' (ANC and UDF) and the workerists (COSATU) were much slower than BCM in recognizing the importance of 'intellectual' and 'cultural' struggle. These were also slow to set up 'cultural departments' to 'counter' the appeal of BC ideology. However, during the 1980s, once the importance of 'culture' was recognized, the MDM was able to 'appropriate' some of the 'intellectual capital' provided by BCM (see Raubenheimer, 1991: Chapter 5). In this regard BCM ironically provided the foundation upon which (non-BC) popular MDM 'mass action' was mobilized in the first half of the 1980s.

Gramsci also argued that the Left needed to try and 'co-opt' some of the Right's intellectuals. Although the BCM-phase rejected this approach (largely because of the Franz Fanon influence), the 1980s saw a shift (largely mediated by the UDF and Cosatu) towards the active 'recruitment of white intellectuals into what came to be called the 'democratic camp' (UDF/Cosatu/MDM). The 1980s in fact saw some significant successes both with regard to the recruitment of white

petit bourgeois intellectuals into the leftist camp, and with regard to the spread of socialist discourse in South Africa.

Further, Gramscian logic directs the Left towards recognizing the need for leftist intellectuals to develop an understanding of the way Rightist intellectuals organize the ruling hegemony/civil society. In South Africa, the 1980s saw a proliferation of historical material analysis of apartheid and its history, as well as the dissemination of this knowledge by Ravan Press, Work in Progress, Africa Perspective, Critical Health, Critical Arts, Transformation, Sached, etc.

Fourthly, leftist intellectuals need to be 'bonded' with non-intellectual forces in the leftist camp. Gramsci (1971:15, 129) argued that this welding process was the task of the "Modern Prince" (the revolutionary political party). Such a 'bonding process' will, of necessity, be tied to a communicative process and the superstructural-intellectual work associated with developing communication-bonds. This 'bonding' process can be a tense and difficult one because there is often a working class and lumpenproletariat distrust of intellectuals. This is (ironically) extended into an anti-intellectualism on the part of sections of the leftist petit-bourgeois intellegensia -- eg. leftist journalists -- themselves (as they attempt to deny their intellectual status)!

In the South African context this 'bonding' process has (necessarily) taken a different form to the model as originally intended by Gramsci. The 'modern prince' in South Africa is more complex than in Gramsci's formulation wherein the 'modern prince' meant a communist party. This is not the case in South Africa where most Marxists have opted to throw in their lot with the ANC popular

alliance, and where the SACP went as far as to formally 'join' the ANC. From these actions it would appear that South African Marxists have decided that (rather than their own 'purist' Communist party) it is the ANC (in alliance with the SACP and Cosatu) instead who represent the most significant potential 'modern prince'. What is significant in this arrangement is that the ANC does not espouse Marxism (or even 'socialism'), and the SACP has de facto subsumed itself into the ANC such that 'communism' (and 'socialism') has been backgrounded in favour of the ANC's popular-leftist multi-class position. Hence, Marxists are not even attempting to provide a 'modern prince', but are rather (in terms of their 'two-stage' model) 'riding with' non-Marxists during what they term 'phase one'. The ANC-SACP-Cosatu alliance is hence a 'mechanism' for welding together leftist intellectuals (Marxist and non-Marxist) and the masses (working class and non-working class). The SACP says it will only consider establishing a Marxist 'modern prince' in stage two. This, of course, represents a significant 'revision' of Marxist theory. What is interesting is how much a reading of Gramsci serves to 'justify' such a pragmatic 'revisionism'.

A Gramscian-Poulantzian approach (ie. Eurocommunism) would, in fact explicitly direct the left into multi-class alliance building, and an associated attention to superstructural/ideological work (as the basis for 'recruitment', intra-alliance communication, and the building of a leftist civil society). This theme is developed in Chapter 4. The reading of Gramsci and Poulantzas together is valuable because: Gramsci's notion of hegemony is based on a 'dialectical-totality' interpretation of historical materialism, and yet can complement the 'discourse' ideas of Poulantzas on ideology production. In this way Gramsci's dialectical approach can 'correct' Poulantzas' tendency

toward functionalism, and his over-concern for the capitalist hegemony which virtually 'excludes' any considerations of the counter-hegemony.

For Gramsci, both rightist and leftist intellectuals can be engaged in (a) generating consent/legitimacy; (b) organizing alliances and compromises; and (c) helping to direct the political (coercive) 'force'. Gramsci might also have noted the role intellectuals have in generating (d) technocratic knowledge (ie. they help to organize the economic base as well). Central to Gramsci's reconstruction of historical materialism is the idea that the capitalist order protects itself with the superstructures, and not merely with coercion (ie. the political-legal system) (Gramsci, 1971:246-247). Superstructurally capitalism defends itself by: (i) generating consent organized in "civil society" (Gramsci, 1971:242); and (ii) using political compromise and alliances (Gramsci, 1971:267-268). Gramsci's concept of hegemony consists of three elements (a triptych) within a unified process -- namely, consent/legitimacy; political alliances/compromises; and violence/force (see Showstack-Sassoon, 1982). Consequently, hegemony is not equal to legitimacy or ruling by 'cultural leadership' or 'ideological domination'. Obviously, each of these factors are parts of hegemony, but they are not the whole of it. This triptych idea is a central factor in CCS's understanding of power. Hall has expressed concern at the way in which Gramsci has been misinterpreted (and 'hegemony' collapsed into 'ideology') by some of those working in CCS in the USA (in Grossberg, 1986:59)

This triptych idea of hegemony is particularly valuable when analyzing South Africa, where certainly under the P.W. Botha-regime, the NP tried (though not too successfully) to move toward the creation

of a real hegemony - ie. where 'legitimacy' and 'alliances' were as important as 'violence'. (Previously the NP tended to 'ignore' all but violence). Under Botha the mix of coercion, alliance-building and legitimacy was continually in flux: the particular mix being a good indicator of the balance of forces within South Africa at any time. Only when F.W. de Klerk came to power in 1989 did one see the NP successfully shift itself in a direction in any way likely to eventually result in the building of a Rightist alliance with considerable legitimacy within South African society.

Gramsci's view that leftist intellectuals (and hence, in a sense, the 'modern prince' of which they are a part) 'organize the beliefs' of society, raises some interesting questions for historical materialists concerning the notion of 'ideology'. Whereas Lukacs and the Frankfurt School imply that historical materialism is not an ideology, Gramsci shifts the emphasis such that historical materialism can be interpreted as just another ideology. What is more significant, he makes this change within the same leftist-humanist (dialectical-totality) perspective used by Lukacs and the Frankfurt School. For Gramsci, leftist intellectuals are engaged in 'counter-hegemonic' work, which entails organizing 'counter-beliefs' to those that rightist intellectuals are busy organizing. Such a view slides easily into the notion of historical materialism as an ideology. In this respect Gramsci represents a shift within the 'totality' approach. His ideas on ideology are, in this instance, actually closer to those of Althusser the and post-Althusserian 'discourse' approach than to those of Lukacs and the Frankfurt School. For the development of a reconstructed historical materialism this represents a potentially significant shift because Gramsci thence becomes a useful 'link'

between the explicitly dialectical-totality (leftist-humanist) ideas of Lukacs and the Frankfurt School, and 'discourse' (anti-humanist) ideas of the Althusserians. It is also an important shift in so far as it distances leftist theory (and thereby practice) from the notion of historical materialism as automatic 'truth'. Instead, within the Gramscian view, the Left have to work for social acceptance to build a leftist civil society (i.e. not 'impose' a leftist social order, such as occurred in Eastern Europe). Within a Gramscian-Poulantzian conception of building a civil society, the importance of intellectuals increases dramatically. Furthermore, in the Information Age, such a conception increases the importance of a leftist media.

A crucial theme to emerge from Gramsci is that the superstructures and communication should be of central importance to leftist practitioners. This, of course, is a theme which gives Gramsci his importance for any New Leftist advocacy of a 'reconstruction' of historical materialism in a more 'superstructural' direction. This derives from Gramsci's contention that Europe's economically-driven revolution, predicted by Marx, had not come about because the superstructure acted like a series of 'trenches' (Gramsci, 1971:234-235) around the economic base, 'protecting' it from attack. This led to Gramsci's explanation of the Soviet Revolution as an outcome of the backwardness of Russia -- ie. Russia had not yet developed its (superstructural) trenches and so was more vulnerable to attack (Gramsci, 1971:238).

In South Africa, the protective superstructural trenches have been poorly developed with regard to the black sector of society. However, the NP clearly recognized this gap in its defences and both WHAM and

the National Security Management System's (NSMS) 'oil spot' strategy bore early testimony to their recognition of the need to construct rightist superstructural trenches. The 1990 reforms carried this recognition even further. The South African Right and their MNC allies are now clearly intent upon constructing such trenches in South Africa (and the reforms create at least the possibility of success). The resources the Right have to back up their reforms (together with the weakened leftist position on a world-wide basis), in fact, give them a considerable chance of being successful. The South African Right, for example, has a virtual monopoly of education and media resources [5].

Gramsci's view was that leftists faced with such 'superstructural trenches', had to lay siege to the system (Gramsci, 1971:239). In this way Gramsci shifted the emphasis away from economism and towards a reconstructed historical materialism in which the subjective, or superstructures, also play a significant part. And if the 1990 reforms serve to speed up South African integration in the MNC/Information Age (which seem highly possible), the South African left may well find itself in need of 'laying siege' to such a superstructural trench system (staffed by a local comprador group). This would seek to take advantage of the still poor development of superstructural trenches in the black sector; and try and prevent and/or slow the reformed Right's attempts to develop such superstructural trenches amongst this group. As a first step this would require an analysis of the existing superstructural trenchwork developed by the Right.

What Gramsci directs us to is a totality approach to praxis; ie. contradictions may inherently exist in capitalism (and in its racial-capitalist form in South Africa), but these can be either 'blocked' or 'encouraged' to manifest themselves. So whereas Marx's work

specifically concentrated on economic contradictions, Gramsci was more concerned with the way the superstructures can serve to 'block' any economically-derived contradictions. The struggle between the Right and Left should not only be thought of as taking place at the economic level. Rather, a struggle at the superstructural level (Gramsci, 1971:229,239) is part of the total leftist struggle. This represents a significant de facto reconstruction of historical materialism. By extension then, leftists need to look beyond purely economic contradictions as a source of social change, and so develop a leftist communicology. If the superstructures can be used (in a hegemonic fashion) by rightist intellectuals to bolster and protect capitalism, then they can also be used (in a counter-hegemonic fashion) by leftist intellectuals' to: (a) counteract the work of the rightist intellectuals; (b) help make manifest the economic contradictions; and (c) develop specifically superstructural contradictions (within the 'totality' of capitalist relations of production). Further, Gramsci notes how different historical material conditions necessitate different types of hegemonic struggle; ie. the intellectuals who 'organize' the beliefs in the superstructures need to be sensitive to the changing historical material circumstances if they wish to be successful. Hence, Gramsci serves as a valuable bridge between the (theoretical) 'totality' approach of Lukacs and the Frankfurt School and the praxis orientation of leftists like Enzensberger, Mattelart, Lenin, etc. (who will be dealt with in Chapter 3).

There are several problems with Gramsci's approach. Like the Frankfurt School theorists, he tended to over-estimate the potential power of the superstructures, and the intellectuals who staff these,

while under-estimating the role of the recipients (the masses) to re-interpret, use, or even ignore superstructural products. Gramsci made the same mistake that the NP (following the likes of Clutterbuck, 1981) made when they reduced 'insurrection' to the work of a few 'instigators'. The culturalist emphasis on the masses and recipients as active participants is an important 'corrective' to this Gramsci/Frankfurt School (or, indeed Clutterbuck) tendency to over-estimate the power of cultural workers.

An area that Gramsci does not develop fully is his concern with the need to try and co-opt some rightist intellectuals onto the leftist 'side'. To a limited extent such co-option has occurred in South Africa -- ie. the left-commercial press is often staffed by journalists from the rightist 'guild press'. However, those wishing to develop Gramsci's ideas in this regard will need to consider some of the potential practical problems that arise. Examples of this are: (a) anti-intellectualism and mistrust of petit bourgeois intellectuals by the Left; and (b) the tendency toward intellectual elitism and the potential control of any 'Modern Prince' by the intellectuals (see Louw, 1986:12). (Perhaps aspects of the 'iron law of oligarchy' theory -- ie. that there exists a natural tendency towards a small in-group always ultimately gaining control of political organizations (see Michels, 1962) -- needs to be taken seriously by leftists). In other words, the role of intellectuals (especially ex-rightist intellectuals) within the 'modern prince' is not as unproblematical as a simplistic reading of Gramsci might suggest. This is particularly true in contemporary South Africa where such a strategy would be complicated even further by the problems of the racial skewing in access to education, and by a legacy of Bantu Education and Christian National

Education.

Volosinov: language and historical materialism

Volosinov's Marxism and the Philosophy of Language (1973) (first published in 1929) is another seminal text for the development of a leftist communicology. The other theorists referred to in this chapter deal with 'macro' superstructural issues such as the media, ideology, intellectuals etc. Volosinov (a pseudonym for Bakhtin), however, turned his attention in another direction -- he examined the 'micro' issue of the smallest units of language itself, namely signs and codes. These are the very building blocks of the superstructural dimension of human existence.

Like the Frankfurt School theorists and Gramsci, Volosinov attempted a reconstruction and widening of historical materialism such that the paradigm could deal with the subjective dimension of human existence. Volosinov, however, attempted his reconstruction while resident inside the Stalinist USSR. For this reason he was not, like Gramsci, 'lucky' enough to be shielded from Stalin's wrath by a prison wall. As a result Volosinov 'disappeared' during one of Stalin's purges.

From a contemporary perspective it might appear self-evident that developing a knowledge of ideology requires the analysis of language. Yet before Volosinov, the 'subjective' phenomenon of language had not been on the historical materialist agenda. In stating that he viewed the base-superstructure problematic as a fundamental issue, Volosinov (1973:17) placed the 'subjective' squarely onto the Soviet-Marxist agenda. More significantly, he was the first to attempt to deal with language and semiotics from an historical materialist perspective

(giving him a significance beyond Soviet-Marxism).

Volosinov's approach to language is a rigorous application of a (dialectical) 'totality' method. Although his concern is with language and the subjective, he never allows this to become a 'subjectivism' (in which the 'material' is forgotten). This makes Volosinov's work exceptional, since other semiology and semiotics remains 'subjectivist'. The concern with language from the position of reified, synchronic and de-contextualized (subjective) structures (eg. Saussure, 1974) is highly problematic. Likewise, a materialist (economistic) structuralist approach to communication (eg. de la Haye, 1980) is just as problematic to a reconstructed historical materialism. A 'totality' approach would further question methodologies claiming the existence of purely autonomous ('free floating') 'subjectivities' (eg. as found in some forms of phenomenology, hermeneutics and post-structuralism). Such 'idealisic' interpretations are facilitated by the 'apparently' subjective and 'fluid' appearance of language and consciousness. Both the pure subjective ('free' consciousness) and pure objective (orthodox materialist) interpretations are an abstraction, which is why the totality perspective has difficulty accepting both economistic materialism and those phenomenologists, hermeneuticians and semioticians who ignore the material. Volosinov 'transcends' both materialism and subjectivism. Instead, in his study, language (specifically signs) is the 'site' where subject and object meet (Volosinov, 1973:39-41). So for Volosinov the sign is where the social world and the psyche (consciousness/subjective) meet. Further, Volosinov's interpretation of the social world is an historical material one -- ie. contextualization is central to the Volosinovian

method. Hence, for Volosinov (1973:25-26), the sign is subjective, but it is also objective: the sign is where the objective and subjective interpenetrate. Hence semiotics becomes a site at which one can study the subjective from a materialist perspective: through studying the sign it becomes possible to initiate a materialist study of ideology.

Volosinov's method is, however, of more than theoretical interest. From a South African perspective, his (semiotic-based) reconstruction of historical materialism gives us an excellent tool for the analysis of apartheid as both an ideological and a material phenomenon. Apartheid as ideology has been a subjective process 'inhabiting' the superstructures: it has been a racist belief and language system which is processed and reproduced in superstructural institutions like schools, universities, the courts and the media. If this ideology has been a language (system of signs), it is a language which has always has been dialectically intertwined with the objective base: apartheid has never been 'pure' subjectivity or belief. Apartheid has also had a material base in so far as many white South Africans perceived their economic interests to be threatened by a one-person-one-vote system (since such a system would result in a material redistribution of wealth to the black majority, hence relatively impoverishing whites. This subjective perception has historical material roots: in 1949 apartheid ideology (as subjectivity) served the (material) interests of the Afrikaner petit bourgeoisie, working class and rural land-owners (O'Meara, 1983). By the late 1980s apartheid ideology, linguistically 'reformed' into the notion of 'separate group identities' and the 'defence of law and order'), served the material interests of state bureaucrats (who were increasingly militarized) and the white suburban petit bourgeoisie. Apartheid was not an irrational subjective

imposition onto South Africa as liberal analysis contends: apartheid was a material and subjective 'totality', in which the rhetoric of apartheid served deeper material interests. Only once apartheid was no longer materially viable would it become 'irrational' -- the late 1980s saw that development. The costs of the Angolan/ Namibian war by 1987, as well as the costs of sanctions from 1986 to 1989, meant that apartheid was no longer materially advantageous. It had become a material liability for those (whites) it had been intended to benefit. The year 1990, therefore, saw the first attempts to implement a real reform of apartheid.

Certainly in any conflict with the NP, especially in a 'negotiation-phase' (or later 'parliamentary-phase'?), there will be a need to take heed of both the rhetoric and the deeper material interests of apartheid. Only in this way will maximal advantage be won over from the NP. In a post-apartheid situation (if the Left comes to power), leftist intellectuals will need to work out a programme for altering in (Volosinovian) tandem both the material and ideological 'components' of apartheid (racial-capitalism). Only in this way will the NP's constituency be made a part of a leftist-led post-apartheid hegemony which uses 'legitimacy', political-alliances', and 'language' - ie. which does not repeat the mistakes of either NP-ruled South Africa, or Soviet-ruled Eastern Europe which relied too greatly on violence.

Volosinov's semiotics, in other words, does not locate ideology purely in consciousness (the subjective). Rather, 'ideology' is interpreted as the way in which 'society' enters the 'mind' through signs (Volosinov, 1973:11, 39). In South Africa, for example, the

material interests of one sector (ie. in the 1950s: the Afrikaner petit bourgeoisie, workers and land-owners) required that society be re-ordered in accordance with their economic interests. This re-ordering took the form of 'concrete' changes (re-settlements and group areas; job segregation; and the transfer of wealth from the English-speaking capitalist sector to the Afrikaner-dominated state/bureaucratic sector). But this material re-ordering was accompanied by a 'subjective' re-ordering: ie. (a) an ideological-rhetorical rationalization for this materialist exploitation, plus (b) the 'perceptual' changes occurring as a matter of course due to the new material re-ordering (eg. the perception of living in a 'white' world where blacks only 'entered' as servants). Hence, apartheid as a social order entered into the minds of South Africans as a (subjective) sign system. Signs thus have a 'material' basis (Volosinov, 1973:11) and are produced within an historical material context (Volosinov, 1973:21). Semiotics then becomes the study of the interpenetration of the psyche (subject), the material (object) and the (historical material) context. This represents a tremendous advance on Saussure's (1974) semiology because Volosinov's signs are contextualized historically and materially and incorporate the notion of the dialectic. Saussure's signs are reified subjective abstractions, ie. generalized into 'universals'. It is because Volosinov steers clear of such universalized abstractions that his work assumes a value to leftists engaged in superstructural struggle. Traditional Saussurian semiology fits into the conception of a practical-oriented "struggle for the sign" (Tomaselli, 1986:14) only with difficulty. There is no such difficulty with Volosinov's work.

Most significant though, from the perspective of a 'totality'

reconstruction of historical materialism, is the fact that Volosinov adopts an explicitly dialectical view of ideology and semiotics (Volosinov, 1973:31-40). He assumes that the dialectical contradiction is inherent in the very nature of the sign. The sign is dynamic, and meaning is not fixed: signs and meaning are inherently dialectically (dialogically) fluid. In South Africa, for example, we see how signs are continually shifting their meaning; sometimes: (a) as a result of willful manipulation (eg. the South African government's use of the term 'peoples'. This was done in order to 'naturalize' the idea that there could never be a single South African citizenship -- ie. one 'people'); (b) due to willful co-option (eg. the South African government and capital's attempts to use UDF terms like 'non-racial' and 'community' for its own purposes. These terms were re-read through conservative, and even racial eyes in the co-opted form. The result was a a multi-racial, and hence racially-defined understanding of what a community was); and (c) due to a 'natural mutation' as historical material conditions change (eg. the concept 'Nationalist' moved from meaning an Afrikaner-exclusive phenomenon into a White-inclusive phenomenon. It could now mutate into a South African inclusive phenomenon). Monitoring shifts in signification in all the sectors of the population provides a valuable source of 'intelligence' concerning moves within the NP, as well as 'signals' indicating when the left should 'advance', 'withdraw', or even seek to 'co-opt' and possibly 'assimilate' former sectors of the Right.

When Volosinov (1973:23) speaks of the sign as "an arena of class struggle" he is not talking in terms of a materialist (economistic) reductionism in which language (sign systems) is reduced to a one-on-

one relationship with 'class'. For example, apartheid is not an exclusively economic-class phenomenon; it also contains a (subjective) racist 'belief', which may have had its origins in economics, but has now taken on a 'life of its own'. So materialist interests then take on subjective properties inside the mind. Volosinov (1973:23) explicitly states in this regard that class struggle takes place "within one and the same sign community". A materialist (class) struggle is also a subjective (semiotic or communication) struggle. Social contradictions can manifest themselves in a sign system as surely as they then manifest themselves in the economic system. In South Africa, the sign 'apartheid' itself became such a contradiction for its inventors, the NP, because it served to mobilize considerable (internal and external) opposition to the NP. As a result, the NP engaged in a process of trying to kill this sign, while their opponents trying to retain and use the term for mobilization. The NP's 1990 reforms may have finally enabled them to successfully kill this sign.

The core of Volosinov's work is concerned with the same (dialectical) 'totality' method as Lukacs, but he reads this approach into a concern with semiotics and language. Unlike Sausserian semiology, Volosinov's semiotics is a dialectical and materialist structuralism. There can be no generalized 'given' sign in Volosinov's system. Rather, each sign is (historically and materially) fluid, and actively 'struggled' over within the totality of its social context. One might add that whole sign systems can also be struggled over. An example would be moves during the second half of the 1980s towards 'claiming' Afrikaans as a language not of the Afrikaner-nationalist suppressors, but a sign-system actually derived from the 'kitchen-Dutch' (kombuis Hollands) of the Cape slaves. This would enable

Afrikaans to be 're-claimed as a language of the leftist struggle against apartheid (Willemse, 1987; Roberge, 1990). What is then central to Volosinovian semiotics is that the study of the sign (dialectically) 'connects' the (fluid) 'interface' (ie. 'totality') of subject and object; the individual psyche; and the social context (and class struggle). Ideology is seen to be 'born' within this dialectical totality of subject and object, although Volosinov recognizes that the "dominant ideology" will try and "stabilize" itself (Volosinov, 1973:24). This ties up with the Gramscian notion of the work done by rightist intellectuals who will be attempting to stabilize the ideology that underpins their hegemony. In South Africa the work of those academics and journalists trying to create and popularize a reformed-Right discourse falls into this category.

But to say that those working within the dominant ideology (sign system) will attempt to stabilize this sign-system is clearly not the same as Saussurian semiology wherein signs are assumed to be 'stable' (ie. a synchronic view of signs). Sausserian structuralism in fact assumes that a reified structure exists. Whereas Volosinov's structuralism assumes a diachronic (and contradictory) process, Saussure's ideas tend towards a deterministic interpretation of structure in which the mind is 'imprisoned' in the structures of language. This view is hence the 'subjective' equivalent to deterministic materialism. From a 'totality' reconstructed historical materialism such a deterministic subjectivism is as unacceptable as deterministic economism.

Volosinov's semiotic structuralism would be a reconstruction based on (i) a (dialectical) 'totality' interpretation of a humanist-leftism;

(ii) in which contradictions and praxis were foregrounded. In other words:

(a) Volosinov's method is the same (dialectical) totality approach of subject and object found in Lukacs, the Frankfurt School and Gramsci. It is grounded in the same logic that informed Habermas' challenge to historical materialists; but

(b) Volosinov's approach does not assume totality to be (reified) 'truth' as in Lukacs (ie. it is a 'method' for Volosinov), nor does it assume the superstructures are all-powerful (as in the Frankfurt School and Gramsci). Volosinov's approach can accommodate the idea of the masses as active co-creators of meaning (a theme to be picked up next when we look at the culturalists);

(c) Volosinov's semiotics is not of the same subjectivist or undialectical type as Saussure's, but is rather explicitly oriented toward a 'totality' (subjective and objective) social 'struggle'. Hence it is a semiotics that complements Enzensberger's (1974) challenge to historical materialists. (This challenge will be discussed in Chapter 3); and

(d) because Volosinov's semiotics represents an explicit 'totality' (of subject and object), it has an in-built 'break' against the tendency of moving towards the sort of 'subjectivism' that has developed in the 'discourse' approach associated with certain post-Althusserians/post-structuralists.

Volosinov consequently pioneered a theoretical route to a reconstructed (ie. 'totality') historical materialism which offered a way of 'penetrating' into the less 'tangible' mind or 'consciousness' dimension of the superstructures. Whereas the Frankfurt School approach the superstructures via the more 'tangible' media or 'culture

industry'; and Gramsci studied the superstructures via 'intellectuals' (also a more 'concrete'/material phenomena), Volosinov's route was via language and signs themselves. This, from a materialist perspective, is a particularly difficult route to adopt. For historical materialists interested in this 'inner' dimension of ideology and its relationship to the 'material', Volosinov's method represents a means of access. In opening this dimension his work has enriched the superstructure debate within historical materialism, and offered leftists a tool for the non-reductionistic (in either its subjectivist or objectivist forms) analysis of ideological forms such as apartheid. Such analysis is not merely theoretically interesting -- it is practically necessary if the Left is to find ways of countering rightist ideologies. As humans increasingly 'live' the second hand realities of media-disseminated sign systems in the contemporary Information Age, so it becomes ever more important for leftists to challenge these sign systems.

However, Volosinov's work itself remains purely theoretical and unconnected to a sense of practical struggle. In this respect his work has certain similarities to the Frankfurt School; similarities which make many in the practically-oriented Left shun such work as irrelevant to leftist struggle. In one sense, an unconnectedness to practical struggle allows for a 'specialization of effort' which results in a theoretical sophistication. The sort of sophistication found in Volosinov is equally valuable to 'practice' for historical materialism and for 'the struggle'. If Habermas' challenge is to be met, and a reconstructed historical materialism (ie. a method to deal with the subjective/ superstructures) is to be built upon a 'solid foundation', then the work of historical materialist theoreticans is, as Korsch

(1970) noted, just as sorely needed as the work of practitioners. So to criticize or ignore Volosinov for his theoreticism would be inappropriate. Rather, the Left would be advised to attempt to translate and operationalize his ideas into a practical struggle for the sign; a notion to be picked up again in Chapter 3.

Williams' culturalist critique of reified theory

The work of Raymond Williams is of particular significance for a New Leftist reconstruction of historical materialism, because he critiques reified Marxist theories, including the reification of the 'totality' approach of, for example, Lukacs. Williams shares many similarities with Korsch's (1970) critique of Marxism (examined in the next chapter). However, far from invalidating the 'totality' approach, Williams' critique, in fact, holds the possibility of helping improve it. Williams explicitly introduces an 'active subjectivity' into Marxist communication studies. His work, along with Habermas, is a good example of a contemporary attempt to explicitly hybridize the idealist and realist paradigms. He develops the idea of a 'collective subjectivity' and in the process opens up a new direction for historical materialist (and socialist) cultural studies (and/or aesthetics) to explore.

In opening up this direction, culturalists (like Williams, Richard Hoggart and Edward Thompson) were, in the British context, concerned with restoring a sense of an active working class cultural creation and resistance into leftist debate. In the South African context, the active features, and/or resistance, of the subaltern groups (eg. the black working class, African peasants, etc) has been suppressed by white historiography (see Boyce, 1970; Green,'1958; Kane, 1954; Kruger,

1969; Muller, 1968; and Van Jaarsveld, 1971). Reclaiming a sense of subaltern resistance (through culturalist analysis) is important for generating a 'pride' amongst the suppressed (see Fanon, 1967). However, such an 'historical' use of culturalism is matched in South Africa by an equally (if not more) important task of the active creation of the future. In South Africa there is a 'fluidity' not immediately apparent in Britain. This 'fluidity', together with an emergence of social contradictions can, if exploited, lead to the subaltern groups (demographically dominated by the black working class) seizing the initiative and winning power. The culturalists offer a theoretical route to such an active search for and seizing of available contradictions.

Williams is aware of the ease with which leftists slip into over-simplifications, such as economic determinism, reification, utopianism or totalitarianism. In the South African context, such a self-conscious avoidance of reductionism is particularly crucial if the racial, tribal and nationalist issues are to be faced. William's (1973) concern with such methodological issues, and in particular, his discussion of the base-superstructure problematic, is seen as all-important methodologically in the development of a non-reductionistic theory able to deal with the subjective, communication, etc. Williams' culturalism steers a course between the economistic political economy approach and Lukacs' reification of theory. He also avoids the tendency of both the Frankfurt School and Althusser to reify active subjectivity into a 'culture industry' or 'ISA' ('prison house of language').

Williams (1973:3) recognizes the central importance of the base-superstructure (subject-object) metaphor in the development of a

reconstructed historical materialist communication. He also acknowledges the inherent problems of using this theoretical metaphor, since as a metaphor it is reductionist and unable to help us 'grasp' the complexity it supposedly addresses (Williams, 1973:5). Furthermore, there has been a tendency to collapse the superstructures into the notion superstructure (Williams, 1973:4). The inherent structuralism of the base-superstructure metaphor tends to become reified (Williams, 1983:303-5), while in its 'totality' format the metaphor encompasses 'too much' and so 'empties of its content' (Williams, 1973:7). Finally, it 'violates' Williams' conception of socialism as 'democratic', because it implies a determining structure and so perceives of the subject not as 'active', but rather as manipulable (passive) masses (Williams, 1963:292; 1983:306). This notion is especially important for any leftists concerned with the development of a South African democracy built upon a real grassroots participative culture (within local-level 'public spheres'). Such an active grassroots culture could serve as a real bulwark against either an undemocratic Left (eg. Eastern Europe) seizing power, and/or against the co-option of sections of the leftist leadership by MNC.

In the South African context, the reductionisms Williams is concerned with could result in the following sorts of 'errors':
(i) refusing to acknowledge the complex interactions between race (as subjective/ideological phenomenon) and class (as objective). This can take the form of either reducing the South African problem (and hence solution) to either a purely class problem, or a purely race problem;
(ii) refusing to differentiate between different components (and even sub-components) of the superstructures in South Africa. The

superstructures always provide 'gaps', 'cracks' and contradictions. This results in a failure to recognize that even at the height of the apartheid order, some elements of the superstructure were not being 'controlled' by and/or 'subservient' to the racial-capitalist order. Rather, there are qualitative differences between sections of the media; parts of the judicial system; parts of the education system; and even sections of the 'establishment' political structures. 'Differentiation' between these provides a possible way of grasping tactical advantages by exploiting such differences within and between the superstructures;

(iii) a reified structuralism resulting in the two extremes of vanguardism or of passively 'waiting' for economic contradictions to 'deliver' a revolution. Both violate the notion of socialism as active popular democracy. If the intention is to actively build a democratic socialism in South Africa then the notion of determining structures (whether objective or subjective) cannot be countenanced.

As important as Williams' critique is; just as important is the way in which Williams also offers a means of 'salvaging' the base-superstructure(s) idea for use by reconstructed historical materialist communication studies. Williams recognizes that the structural approach can be used heuristically rather than in a formalist way (Williams, 1983:306). Further, Williams (1983:294) has noted the value of heuristic simplifications when studying society; ie. presumably it is valuable as long as one remembers that one is using a metaphor (to help explain complexity) and not using a reified 'model' (which becomes a substitute for complexity).

When Williams (1961:65) uses the notion of structure, it is an 'active', not 'reified', structure. Hence Williams' use of the notion

of base and superstructure is explicitly process-oriented. His value lies in the way that he explicitly challenges structural determinacy in favour of a New Leftist notion of an active subjectivity; but a subjectivity within (contextual) constraints (Williams, 1977: Part II). So for Williams the values, experiences, intentions and goals of individuals need to be taken into account. However, these 'values' and 'goals' are not 'free-floating' entities; rather they are 'located' within specific classes or groups of people. This, of course, opens up a possible new route to the understanding of class (and other forms of) conflict: via the experiences (individual and collective) of subjective actors operating within any historical material context. This forms the basis for Williams' culturalist reading of historical materialism. Williams argues in this regard:

> The whole thrust of Marx's reading of history was then, first, to insist that all cultural processes were initiated by humans themselves, and second, to argue that none of them could be fully understood unless they were seen in the context of human activities as a whole (Williams, 1983a:23).

This quote, which gets to the heart of Williams' culturalist interpretation of communication, not only acts as a 'corrective' for reductionist materialism, but could also form (as recognized by the Birmingham School) a valuable component within any leftist communication theory. Williams hence: (a) rejects materialist determinacy; and (b) recognizes the importance of active subjectivity; yet (c) acknowledges the historical material view that the human subject operates within 'parameters'. This opens the door to a leftist search for superstructural praxis within the context of the Information Age. If only for this reason alone Williams needs to be recognized as offering an important theoretical tool to those wishing to actively

build a South African leftist media. Tomaselli's (1988) work has understood this and followed Stuart Hall, rather than Richard Hoggart (Tomaselli, 1988:34). Hoggart's (1958:13) interpretation of culturalism placed the working class onto the 'cultural' agenda and challenged the 'high-low' cultural dichotomy notion. However, Hoggart did not develop this insight in a 'cultural praxis' direction as CCS and Tomaselli have done.

So for Williams, totality as a 'process' includes both subject and object, and hence the notion of an absolutely 'free' and 'autonomous' subject is, for culturalism, as much a reified and formalist abstraction as is absolute materialist determinism. It is, in fact, significant that Williams' (1961:63) notion of "experience" (or active consciousness) is explicitly holistic: ie. it is subject and object together (Williams, 1961:36), rather than a 'pure' subjectivity (Williams, 1983:126-127). Hence, although Williams is concerned with the 'active subject' -- because of his concern with socialist-democracy (Williams, 1983:310) -- he none-the-less remains concerned with the subjective from within an historical material perspective (Williams, 1961:61-68). Hence Williams' understanding of the subject/subjective is not a subjectivism (see Williams, 1983:124). So when Williams (1961:57) speaks of 'culture' as a "way of life", he is talking about the complex process of subject-object totality (Williams, 1961:59, 63): ie an active human process of subject-object interaction.

The contemporary South African context demands a theory able to deal with à society in which the dialectical contradictions (of a crisis-ridden and reforming racial-capitalism) are fully 'visible' and 'active'. From a reconstructed historical materialist perspective Williams' concern for 'process' and 'active subjectivity' becomes just

as valuable in such a situation as any leftist concern with economic contradictions. Williams' approach suggests an 'openness' to a 'multi-faceted' form of struggle(s). For the Left, confronting the shifting conditions of a world re-aligning itself in the wake of the Second World collapse, such 'openness' would seem a precondition for any possibility of success.

Williams thus offers a critique of the 'totality' approach which facilitates a linkage between a leftist 'totality' theory and the notion of active (voluntarist?) human subjects engaged in struggle. Williams hence offers a way to 'link' Lukacs and the Frankfurt School on the one hand, and Enzensberger on the other. A critically important aspect of Williams' work is that he offers a 'corrective' to the Frankfurt School's pessimism from within an approach easily co-optable into a 'totality' reconstruction of historical materialism. This is because Williams sees 'totality' as a human process wherein the subjective is not simply determined by the contradictory (capitalist) totality, but is rather one of the 'agents' of the contradictory process. But neither is human subjectivity autonomous of the economic context. Recognizing the duality of this process is all-important in the construction of a leftist communication theory. But Williams' explicit inclusion of active subjects represents an important re-interpretation of the the notion of dialectical totality because it thereby becomes possible (a la Gramsci's ideas on 'organic intellectuals') to consider 'encouraging' contradictions (within the 'total' process) within the superstructures. This is de facto what the South African progressive-alternative press attempted to do during the State of Emergency period (1986-1989). In Enzensberger's terms this

would be called the search for 'gaps'. (This notion will be developed further in Chapter 3).

The notion of active human subjects also produces a revised (ie. culturalist) understanding of "mass culture" (see Williams, 1983:192-7). From a culturalist perspective the masses are neither seen as inherently 'prisoners' of a reified totality (passive and manipulated by the mass media, in the way the Frankfurt School saw them), nor 'controlled' by (Althusser's) ISAs or RSAs. For Williams and the culturalists, there is an optimism because resistance is not only seen as possible but inevitable in the face of domination and attempts at manipulation. The consciousness of the underclasses was, in fact, precisely a product of such resistance and struggle against domination. It was this struggle which gives rise to popular culture (see Clarke, et al, 1979).

Williams hence interprets the 'masses' as active co-creators (within the subject-object totality) of culture (Williams, 1961:40, 44). For culturalists, masses are no longer merely passive 'consumers' (Williams, 1983:79) of culture. Rather, they now actively 'use' and co-create it because they are seen to have "intention" (Williams, 1963:292). The South African black masses, for example, despite severe repression, actively created their own 'popular' culture through an appropriation of both Western and African forms. (This process has, and is, being documented by the University of the Witwatersrand's History Workshop -- see Bozzoli, 1983). The South African left clearly derives advantage from 'utilizing' the 'energy' being released in this way.

This culturalist interpretation is facilitated by Williams' recognition that the 'subject' is an (inter-)active part of the total

dialectical process. In other words, it is not merely an 'acted upon' part (of a reified determining whole). This culturalist innovation -- derived from Williams' Culture and Society (first published in 1958) and Thompson's Making of the English Working Class (first published in 1963) -- offers these valuable methodological insights to a reconstructed historical materialism. One way for a reconstructed historical materialism to incorporate these culturalist insights is to use the route of the Birmingham School (see Hall et al, 1980) or the CCSU/CCMS (see Tomaselli, 1988). Both of these Centres have already applied culturalism within their construction of a New Leftist approach to communication and the media.

The Birmingham School's merger of culturalism and structuralism

The challenge for the New Left is to find ways to accommodate (in non-reductionist ways) the subjective and communication. This has been comprehensively dealt with by the 'totality' approach to historical materialism. However, other equally significant 'answers' to the 'challenge' have emerged. In the process of seeking to answer the challenge they too have helped to lay the basis for a leftist communication theory. Three such important contributions have been made by the culturalist, the Althusserian-structuralists and the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), or Birmingham School, who attempted to synthesize culturalism and structuralism.

Richard Johnson sums up the CCCS position within the various moves to reconstruct historical materialism, with the seminal observation that: "neither culturalism nor structuralism will do" (Johnson in Barrett, et al, 1979: 54). The Birmingham School recognized the tension that existed between these two schools of leftist thought; ie.

the emergence of a concern with communication and the subjective, developed a tension between the culturalists (like Williams) and structuralists (like Althusser). Culturalism stresses the way in which humans actively make culture; while structuralism stresses the 'pre-programming' of humans by structures. For orthodox Marxists these structures were objective (economic). For semioticians and linguists --eg. Chomsky, Saussure, Barthes, Althusser -- the structures are subjective (language, signs and codes). CCS located itself at the interface of structuralism and culturalism. This placed CCS across a line of tension within Marxism that in many ways underpinned the rise of the New Left in the 1970s. Johnson noted: "Many of the most important questions in the theory and sociology of culture are now posed not between Marxist and other accounts, but within Marxism itself" (in Bennett, et al, 1981:13). The Birmingham School was interested in "the set of practices through which men and women actively respond to the conditions of their social conditions, creatively fashioning experienced social relationships into diverse and structured patterns of living, thinking and feeling" (Bennett, et al, 1981:10). So CCS recognized that humans are both 'structured' (objectively and subjectively) and 'active' beings. With this recognition CCS set itself the task of trying to synthesize the structuralist and culturalist strands of leftist thought, using Gramsci as a 'meeting place' (Bennett, et al, 1981:12). In this way CCS opened up one possible (New Leftist) route toward the reconstruction of historical materialism.

Before specifically looking at the differences between a 'totality'-structuralism and Althusserian-structuralism, let us first develop

further the CCCS insight that culturalists (especially Williams) needs to be incorporated into leftist communication theory. The CCCS, in fact, produced an extremely valuable insight for communication theory when they recognized that the need to explicitly incorporate a concern with the active human subject (ie. culturalism). It is a recognition that any attempt to meet the 'reconstruction' challenge needs to move beyond 'totality' and incorporate an historical material concern with the active subject. Therein lies a corrective for many of the problems with the 'totality' approach, such as: a tendency toward theoretical reification, pessimism, and a lack of practical engagement in 'getting one's hands dirty' in active involvement and struggle. For those concerned with developing a South African superstructural interventionism (eg. a progressive-alternative press, or other forms of cultural 'struggle') this is of central significance.

Williams' theoretical objections to reified Marxist theory (including 'totality' theory) have been discussed above. Equally important, however, is Williams' development of the idea of active subjectivity. As the CCCS's Stuart Hall correctly realised, the resultant culturalist theory needs to be explicitly incorporated into any reconstructed historical materialism wishing to deal with communication. Significantly, for such a 'reconstruction' Williams builds his notion of the subjective into an explicitly socialist definition: his concern is with the 'collective' subjectivity. An important overlap thus exists between Williams and Habermas' notion of the public sphere. It is an overlap that opens up an important area for leftist praxis, because explicitly <u>democratic</u> leftist practices can be built upon this notion (ie. a theoretical corrective for the errors seen in East European leftist practice).

Williams' culturalism democratizes the concept of culture (Bennett et al, 1981:40), or, as he says: culture is "ordinary" (Williams, 1961:54). For Williams, culture is not the property and/or creation of a social elite alone. Of course, Williams recognizes that some (ie. Gramsci's 'traditional intellectuals') will try to select and define culture in such elitist terms (Williams, 1961:66-70). Rather, for Williams, "everyone" (Williams, 1961:40) in a society is a part of (participant in) the subject-object totality, and so everyone is a co-user/co-creator of the total (subject-object) culture. This view is more than merely theoretically interesting for those in CCS. It has important implications for any media practice: a Williams-type interpretation will strongly influence a media system built in its image in the direction of democratic leftist ('public sphere') practices. Also, Williams has an understanding of communication that will produce a specific interpretation, and hence practice, of art, literature and 'textual' analysis:

(a) Williams' definition goes beyond the narrow confines of the elitist definitions of culture, and so opens up new 'areas' of study such as 'popular culture'. This has particular importance in South Africa where the apartheid regime has nurtured a narrow, elitist and uni-dimensional (white male) understanding of the South African social process and its history. There is a need in South Africa to 'reclaim' the suppressed history of the subaltern groups and to project this forward into the construction of a new South Africanism (which incorporates all South Africans, and not only the white male elite). The Wits History Workshop has been working to recover some of this history, while the New Nation newspaper has been publishing in its

weekly "Learning Nation" supplement a history series that projects this suppressed history.

(b) Williams (1961:44) also sees 'texts' as "practices" -- active subject-object totality. This means 'texts' are no longer seen as reified objects. Hence the 'appreciation' of aesthetics, for example, can no longer be approached in a way that assumes art, literature etc are static objects to be studied as if they were unaffected by the historical material context and by the interpretant/ recipients. The apartheid regime reified cultural products in this way to serve its own narrow conservatism and white nationalism. The cultural products they sought to construct (through superstructures like the SABC, the Performing Arts Councils, the Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns, and museums) reflect this 'reified understanding of culture . (This view can be found in the section on 'cultural life' in any Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa). A reconstruction (and de-apartheidizing) of a South African culture in which all participate will require a process-oriented re-reading and re-constructing of South African cultural texts, as part of the process of building a South African culture in a non-apartheid form.

(c) Williams (1961:61-2), in fact, explicitly realizes that culture needs to be understood in historical material terms -- ie. culture is 'dynamic' and so what is understood as (defined as) 'culture' needs to be understood in context. Williams' Keywords (1983) represents, in fact, the results of an application of his method: he traces out how cultural meanings have changed through a sequence of historical material contexts. Culture is dynamic, fluid, and continually being re-made. For Williams there is not a universal (static) culture or a set of universal (static) definitions, as conservative interpretations

of culture are apt to suggest. Such a notion of static culture has underpinned white nationalist perceptions of South Africa. If this group were simply taught to 're-read' South African cultural texts using Williams' approach, this could in itself effect significant changes in South Africa. Given the 1990 reforms, it is now possible to see the opening up of superstructural spaces through which such 're-reading' becomes possible, if the Left is creative enough to intervene and make use of them.

(d) Williams (1961:64) recognizes both the active subjectivity and the 'constraining' structures within the 'totality' that is culture. His definition of culture as a "structure of feeling". He encapsulates these two 'features' of culture as a totality of both subject and object; and of a process that is both active and constrained. Humans therefore are seen to create culture through an encounter with their objective and subjective context. One such 'encounter' would be the struggle against the apartheid regime: ie. racial-capitalism both constrains (objectively and subjectively) and challenges. Williams' approach hence rejects both materialist and subjectivist determinism, in favour of a more complex interpretation of 'culture' as a subject-object process. Williams hence offers South Africans a valuable tool for grasping the complex process in which racism and class exploitation have simultaneously intermeshed into the 'structure of feeling' that has constituted apartheid. Apartheid has been both structurally, and subjectively 'made' (and 're-made' as circumstances changed).

Williams also offers a method that exudes an optimism missing in both Lukacs and the Frankfurt School. This is because it can deal with how humans created their own 'meaning' through resistance,

In Britain the incorporation of Williams' active subject into CCS is theoretically interesting. In South Africa, however, the incorporation of the active subject into CCS is more than theoretically significant; it directs leftists towards the theory and practice of an active superstructural interventionism (see Tomaselli, 1986b; 1988:46). This is, of course, a function of the contemporary South African context, where social turmoil is so evident. It is hardly surprising then that CCS will need to be re-read and re-worked in a South African context, a process set in motion by Tomaselli (1985a; 1986b; 1988), CCSU (1988), Muller (1985), Muller et al (1985), Muller & Tomaselli (1989), Muller and Cloete (1991) but which needs much further development.

But CCS's value goes beyond the fact that it has pointed out the importance of culturalism for a leftist communication theory. More generally, Hall's proposals for a CCS method (Hall, et al, 1980; and Bennett et al, 1981) clearly complements the New Leftist concern to meet Habermas' challenge to historical materialists. If the concern is to build a leftist theory and practice able to deal with the subjective and communication, then Hall's CCS meets this criteria. Hall's proposals are of value when considering how to go about constructing a New leftist communicology using a reconstructed historical materialism. For Hall, cultural studies is characterized by the fact that in the first instance, it deploys a great variety of approaches and is inter-disciplinary (Hall et al, 1980:15). Hall's basic premise seems to be that understanding culture requires 'ignoring' the academic paradigmatic and disciplinary boundaries which currently segment knowledge (Hall, et al, 1980:21). This complements Habermas' method of drawing upon both the realist (historical materialist) and idealist (hermeneutics) paradigms. In the process, historical materialism is

reconstructed in such a way that it can deal more adequately with communication and the subjective. It can also deal with the Information Age and post modernist age.

Further, CCS is an enterprise with a "tentative character" (Hall et al, 1980:16). This appeals in two senses: it would serve to prevent a (Lukacian) reification of the approach produced; and it complements the 'tentative' and fluid conditions in both a world restructuring in the wake of the collapse of the Second World, and in contemporary South Africa.

Hall also viewed the CCS enterprise as a leftist 'response' to specific contemporary historical material conditions -- a sort of (cultural) 'interventionism' (Hall et al, 1980:16). Thatcherism was their challenge. In South Africa, the problem has been apartheid (racial-capitalism) and, since 1990, the more sophisticated reforming-Right. South African CCS has defined its task as identifying creative ways to make superstructural interventions to challenge the Right.

Finally, Hall's notion of CCS recognizes the value of a 'totality' approach when constructing cultural/communication studies (Hall et al, 1980:21). In fact, Hall attempts to synthesize culturalism, structuralism and Gramsci appears to have been premised upon this idea.

Hall's work as director of the CCCS consequently represents an extremely significant epistemological moment in the development of a leftist communicology. His work is characterized by being a New Leftism, not reducable to a humanist-Marxist approach, but none-the-less having certain similarities to the work of Lukacs, the Frankfurt School and Volosinov. At the same time the Birmingham School sits at the interface of the realist and idealist paradigms and so shares

similar concerns to Habermas'. This body of work thus represents an important component of the Left's attempts to move away from Marxist orthodoxy, and towards some sort of 'synthesis' of the historical materialist and idealist paradigms. Such work is crucial for overcoming the constraints imposed on leftist practice by Marxist-Leninism.

Hall's CCS, however, also problematic because of his failure to: (a) fully examine the difference between the realist and idealist paradigms (see Wilson, 1983); (b) examine the tensions within the Marxist (realist) paradigm itself -- a paradigm that is central to his approach; and (c) define what he understood by 'totality'. This writer regards each of the above three issues as important in terms of the project Hall has undertaken because his definition of CCS was essentially a call for New Leftist work at the realist-idealist paradigmatic interface. Such work requires a theoretical understanding of (a) what each paradigm entails; (b) the paradigmatic differences ('compatibilities' and 'incompatabilities'); and (c) the theoretical value and problems of inter-paradigmatic work. Yet Hall precisely notes how the CCCS moved away from "theoreticism" (Hall et al, 1980:25) relatively early in its history. I will, like Hall, call for an orientation that is not purely theoretical. However, this does not mean theory can be prematurely 'abandoned'. In fact, if the above criticisms are acknowledged, then the CCCS apparently prematurely 'turned away' from "theoreticism".

The most problematic feature of Hall's work is his failure to theoretically delve deeply enough into the tensions within the Marxist paradigm (see Gouldner, 1980; and Kolakowski, 1981). The CCCS approach recognizes the tensions (Bennett, et al, 1981:12), but then 'collapses'

the 'scientific' versus 'critical' Marxist tensions into the 'structuralism' versus 'culturalism' dichotomy. Hall's proposal to 'overcome' this difference through using Gramsci's theory of hegemony (Bennett, et al, 1981:12 and 36) ignores the fact that Gramsci is part of the humanist (i.e. critical) Marxism tradition. In other words, Gramsci is more akin to Williams than to structuralism. The reason that Gramsci is important is because he works within the 'totality' (humanist-Marxist) approach. In other words, Gramsci (like Williams) represents a 'corrective' for deterministic structuralism in either its materialist (eg. Kautsky's orthodoxy) or subjectivist form (eg. Althusserian-semiotics). Hall implicitly recognizes this, but does not link it to the tension within the realist paradigm. Because of this 'omission' he does not consider how Althusserianism represents a 'return' to a sort of deterministic Marxism that the 'totality' approach has tried to move away from.

Further, Hall does not 'carry through' his idea of culture as 'totality'. He has recognized ('intuitively') the need to 'transcend' the realist-idealist paradigm dichotomy (See Hall et al, 1980:23-25), but has not defined it as a cross-paradigmatic problem. Furthermore, he fails to recognize that humanist-Marxism (from Lukacs to Habermas) was precisely an attempt from within historical materialism to cope with the subjective (eg. communication, culture, etc.). In other words, it represents pioneering work dealing with the very concerns Hall proposes that CCS examine. It is Hall's criticism of the base-superstructure metaphor (Bennett, et al, 1981:36) that most clearly reveals his failure to recognize how this metaphor potentially offers CCS the theoretical route to contending with the problems of: (a) the

subject-object interface (ie. contextualizing the subjective); and (b) the intra-Marxist tension (ie. scientific versus critical; or structuralism versus culturalism). These two problems are inter-related, and both meet in the theoretical base-superstructure metaphor.

A 'totality' reconstructed historical materialism and the CCCS share similar problems. Working from a 'totality' perspective, I hence have difficulty in accepting the notion of reified structures (ie. structuralism ); whereas theoretically-derived metaphorical structures (a structural approach) are regarded as heuristically useful to a leftist communicology. Metaphorical structures can be accommodated within a New leftist approach (which emphasizes active subjectivity within objective structures), but reified determining structures are incompatible with the New Leftist project.

This is of more than merely theoretical concern because a 'totality' approach is a form of insurance against idealism when dealing with superstructural matters. Hall's failure to explicitly integrate the theoretical humanist-Marxist work in this area into CCCS accounts for the way he 'unproblematically' incorporated Althusser into CCS. This is a 'problem' that the early South African appropriations of CCS have reproduced (see Muller et al, 1985; Tomaselli and Tomaselli, 1985). Althusserian (subjectivist) structuralism can too easily lead the South African Left into an (Eurocentic) idealism, and hence deflect attention away from the task at hand, namely building a local leftist praxis (ie. a theory and practice synthesis). Certainly, the approaches of both Hall (Hall, et al, 1980:27-35) and Tomaselli (1988:13-46) to a New Leftist communicology tried to avoid the sort of subjectivism and skepticism that Althusserianism can, and has, led to in the post-structuralism of Derrida and Foucault (Bennett, et al, 1981:34-35).

Hall has also tried to avoid the sort of objectivism implicit in the political-economy approach to communication (Bennett et al, 1981:35). However, this can be avoided only by an explicit incorporation of, and adherence to, the theoretical notion of 'totality'. Hall's use of Williams and Gramsci represents an implicit move in this direction. However, in the case of both Hall and Tomaselli, this move has not been theoretically explicit or self-conscious enough.

Although there is no problem with Hall's proposal to integrate the structural approach into CCCS, there are, however, problems with the way in which CCS (uncritically) uses Althusser's (reified) structuralism. From the perspective of the 'totality' approach: (a) Althusser needs to be 'appropriated' by CCS in a much more 'selective' way; and (b) there is a need to look at Volosinov's structuralism (which covers much of the ground Althusser does, yet does so in a way that is more easily incorporable into a 'totality' reconstruction of historical materialism).

Althusserian structuralism is based upon an explicit rejection of the leftist-humanist notion of a subject-object totality. Althusser (1979:229) , in fact, regards Marxism as an "anti-humanism". For Althusser (1979:33), an "epistemological break" occurred in Marx's work in 1845 which he terms a "rupture" (Althusser, 1979:227). He claims:

> When Marx replaced the old couple individual/human essence in the theory of history by new concepts (forces of production, relations of production, etc), he was, in fact, simultaneously proposing a new conception of 'philosophy' (Althusser, 1979: 229).

At the heart of this Althusserian interpretation of Marx is the idea that Marx abandoned a concern with the subjective qua 'subject', and hence simultaneously abandoned the concern with the subject-object relationship. This is obviously a contention that those working from a

New Leftist 'totality' perspective could not accept. For Althusser, Marx "replaced" the concern with the human subject with a concern for structures. As he says:

> The young Marx of the 1844 Manuscripts read the human essence at sight, immediately, in the transparency of its alienation. Capital, on the contrary, exactly measures a distance and an internal dislocation (Decalogue) in the real, inscribed in its structure, a distance and a dislocation such as to make their own effects themselves illegible, and the illusion of an immediate reading of them the ultimate apex of their effects: fetishism. It was essential to turn to history to track down this myth of reading to its lair, ... by discovering that the truth of history cannot be read in its manifest discourse, because the text of history is not a text in which a voice (the Logos) speaks, but the inaudible and illegible notation of the effects of a structure of structures. A reading of some of our expositions will show that, far from making metaphorical suggestions, I take the terms I am using literally. To break with the religious myth of reading: with Marx this theoretical necessity took precisely the form of a rupture with the Hegelian conception of the whole as a 'spiritual' totality, to be precise, as an expressive totality" (Althusser, 1979a:17).

This text gets to the very heart of the Althusser's approach. The assumption underlying his method is that historical materialists concerned with 'culture' need to:

(a) 'distill' Marx's approach/method to the economic base;

(b) that 'method', for Althusser, is structuralism; and

(c) hence, 'structures' must now be sought, by historical materialists, in the superstructures. This is a rather formalist interpretation of Marx, and ironically makes the outcome of the Althusserian project resemble in many respects Chomsky's (non-materialist) structuralism. As with Chomsky, Althusser does provide a useful method for the study of (subjective) texts.

However, if the concern is for a (reconstructed) historical materialist communicology, then Althusser represents a problematic moment within this leftist project. This is especially so when his work is applied to the South African context because although the

(leftist) pessimism underpinning his work may have been appropriate in France in the 1970s, it is less so in post-1976 South Africa (Muller & Tomaselli, 1989:311). This is not to deny the creativity of his attempt to try and salvage the crumbling historical materialist paradigm and/or halt the collapse of the Marxist dream. Althusser clearly identified a core problem with historical materialism -- the paradigm's incapacity to adequately deal with the subjective and communication. But, the result of Althusser's logic is problematic for the leftist project because he: (a) reifies the notion of 'structure' into a variety of structuralist formalism; (b) turns 'structuralism' into an end in itself (ie. the notion of structure as merely an heuristic 'tool' is lost, and is replaced by the idea of a determining, and universal structuralism; (c) makes the (unjustified by himself) assumption that the method Marx developed for use in analyzing the economic base can simply be transferred to analyzing the superstructures; and (d) 'breaks' the subject-object dialectic, thereby 'granting' the superstructures an "autonomy". In this way Althusser opens the door to the very 'idealism' that Marx (1980) criticized, because he de facto suspends any real concern with the economic context. This idealism shifts the emphasis from context to text, and hence represents a serious methodological violation of the historical material method. Althusserianism hence lays the foundation for an idealism that is without an active 'subject' (See Larrain, 1982:154). In this respect Althusser ironically marries a variant of Kautsky's materialist determinism (ie. assuming objective 'laws' applied to the subjective) with a variant of Young Hegelian idealism (ie. by arguing against the subject-object totality). Althusser thereby produced the

anti-historical materialist notion of subjective "autonomy". Consequently, he combined the worst of both the 'extremes' of subjectivism and materialism. Althusser may have been trying to steer a middle course between economic reductionism and voluntarism, but in so doing he produced a determining structuralism (in base and superstructure) and a non-voluntaristic subjectivism. So in trying to salvage Marxism he only exacerbated the crisis, and Althusserian-structuralism ultimately only served to help speed up the shift of the Francophone intellectual debate towards post-structuralism.

From a 'totality' perspective, Althusserian structuralism represents a 'wrong turn' in the attempt to deal with the crisis of Marxism, and/or deal with the Superstructural Age. However, although Althusser is 'out of step' with the New Left solution to the problem favoured by this thesis, his work none-the-less represents an extremely significant epistemological moment in both the collapse of the Marxist dream (and the resultant Marxist pessimism -- Muller & Tomaselli, 1989:310) and in the development of a leftist communicology. There is thus a need to come to terms with Althusser's ideas, because he did develop or introduce a number of concepts which are useful for a leftist communicology. In so doing, he has clearly exerted significant influence on many in the communication field of study. In terms of this thesis, important examples would include Coward & Ellis (1977), Hall and Johnson (Hall, et al, 1980), Tomaselli (1988), Ruth Tomaselli et at, (1989), and Addison (1980) (although Addison mis-interprets Althusser). Further, his work illustrates a number of pitfalls and errors which it is easy for a leftist communication and media studies to slip into.

For the purposes of this thesis, Althusser needs to be examined with

regard to his ideas on the following:

(a) the base and superstructure, especially his ideas on "overdetermination"; and

(b) his ideas on ideology. Here his work on "interpellation" (the structuring of of the 'subject'/language), and on Ideological State Apparatus' (ISAs), are the most important.

In his essay "Contradiction & Overdetermination", Althusser (1979) would seem to have found a potential 'solution' to the base-superstructure problematic. Ironically, however, instead of recognizing the compatibility of his ideas on "contradiction" with humanist-Marxism, Althusser chose to attack this approach instead, and to develop his ideas into a deterministic subjectivist structuralism.

Althusser's anti-humanist view that "as soon as the dialectic is removed from its idealistic shell by Marx, it becomes the direct opposite of the Hegelian dialectic" (Althusser, 1978:90). This interpretation is highly problematic. An alternative interpretation could be: in Marx the dialectic remains the same method, but is merely applied in a different 'area'. So whereas Hegel was concerned with contradictions in the 'subjective', Marx was concerned with contradictions in the 'objective'. A 'totality' approach would be concerned with contradictions in 'both' -- ie. the 'total' (subject-object) process.

However, when Althusser (1979:101 said "a Hegelian contradiction is never really overdetermined", he raised an extremely important point, namely the need to recognize complexity; ie. a number of 'factors' must come together to produce the result. However, what Althusser failed to note is that a materialist Marxist contradiction is also never really

overdetermined. The point is that the notion of "overdetermination" can imply a dialectical totality in the sense understood by Marxist-humanism -- ie. subject and object in (complex) dialectical unity. If an Hegelian (subjective) contradiction is a "simple contradiction" (Althusser, 1979: 103), then so too is a materialist (vulgar Marxist) contradiction 'simple'. But a New Leftist understanding of contradictions (in base and superstructure) is precisely not simple because it is concerned with contradictions in the base, and the superstructure and the 'total' process. Althusser's problem lies in his reading of the dialectical totality method as a structure -- i.e. Althusser sees 'totality' as a 'thing' (structure), rather than a process. What is more, he sees that structure as determined by "one principle of internal unity" (Althusser, 1979:103). From such an Althusserian perspective the idea of dialectical totality does indeed become reductionistic and simplistic (Althusser, 1979:103). However, one can read 'totality' in a different way, namely:

(a) totality consists of a process of subject (superstructures) and object (base);

(b) these 'sub-processes' are in interaction within a 'larger' process;

(c) contradictions can occur anywhere in the total process, ie. in base, and superstructure, and between base and superstructure;

(d) the 'whole' is necessarily dynamic because of contradictions;

(e) the contradictions arise and fuse in different complex ways (in different historical material circumstances) -- ie. the notion of "overdetermination".

The problem with Althusser, from a 'totality' perspective, is that he did not carry through the implications of his ideas in the above way

because he seems to have been opposed to leftist-humanism in principle. Consequently, he did not try to see the potential compatibility between his ideas and the leftist-humanist work within the communication/media studies field.

Althusser's work on the concept of ideology is a derivative of his structuralist and 'subjectivist' reading of Marx (as discussed above). However, whereas Althusser's work on the notion of base and superstructure was both valuable and problematic, more substantive problems can be raised regarding Althusser's notion of ideology. Althusser's work on 'ideology' went in two (inter-related) directions: (i) the development of the notion of the "interpellation" of 'subjects'; and (ii) the development of the concepts "ISAs" and "RSAs". In both cases this writer would argue that other theorists (namely, Volosinov and Gramsci) have worked in these areas, and have produced work that is more easily incorporable into a 'totality' approach to Marxist communication. However, Althusser's work does need to be examined because it represents an important epistemological moment in the development of the concept 'ideology', and he has certainly influenced the work of many leftist communicologists, including CCS.

At the heart of Althusser's work on ideology is the notion "interpellation" (Althusser, 1971:162-163). The concept of interpellation is premised on the idea that just as Marx sought the 'deep structures' within the capitalist economy -- ie. the "essence" (Sayer, 1979:110) -- so too can one seek out the 'deep structures' of human consciousness. For Althusser, the 'deep structures' are to be found in the language through which individuals are integrated into society. In other words, for Althusser, ideology is a system or

structure of "representations" of signs and codes (ie. semiology). Through this system of representations the individual is 'placed into' an "imaginary relationship" with "their real conditions of existence" (Althusser, 1971:152). Althusser attempts to 'materialize' his semiology by 'placing' the 'manufacture' of the 'imaginary relationships' into concrete ideological state apparatuses (ISAs). However, this attempt to claw his way back into historical materialism fails. Instead Althusser produces a subjectivist reductionism because: (a) human consciousness is now reduced to 'pre-given' structures 'outside' of human control (ie. a 'prison house' of language); and (b) the subjective is seen as 'autonomous' (i.e. unrelated to the material base). So Althusser resurrected the notion of 'subject' qua 'subject' (Althusser, 1971:159-161). This means that despite Althusser's claim to see ideology in "materialist" terms (Althusser, 1984:39-40), his work does no such thing. He develops a concern much closer to that of Chomsky, or Saussure or Barthes, than anything resembling an historical materialist communicology. Consequently, when Althusser's ideas are 'co-opted' into a reconstructed historical materialism this needs to be done with just as much (methodological) care as when 'co-opting' other work out of the idealist paradigm (eg. hermeneutics, semiology, etc.).

The problem with Althusser's structuralist notion of "representations" (ideology) can perhaps best be illustrated by comparing it to the more rigorously historical materialist ideas of Volosinov (1973) which have already been discussed in this chapter. For Volosinov, 'signs' are seen as a 'site' where subject and object 'meet' and 'interpenetrate' each other. This notion excludes both subjectivist and materialist reductionism, and yet represents a "materialist" view of the "system of representations". Volosinov does

not understand signs as 'existing' within a reified (and determining) structure in the way that Althusser does: ie. Volosinov's structures are more metaphorical (and hence more 'flexible', and less 'reductionistic') than are Althusser's. So where Volosinov's historical materialism tries to understand (by using the 'totality' approach) the process in which the subjective (consciousness) and objective (economy) inter-penetrate and influence each other; Althusser's historical materialism means directly reading materialist (objective) structures into the consciousness (subjective) dimension (Althusser, 1971:156; and 1984:40). From such a reified notion of a structured consciousness it is easy to understand how Althusser could progress to the idea that "Man is an ideological animal by nature" (Althusser, 1984:45) -- ie. "ideology has no history" (Althusser, 1971:150). Here Althusser is closer to being a Freudian than a Marxist since he transforms Freud's (structuralist) proposition that the "unconsciousness is eternal" is transformed into the proposition that "ideology is eternal... ie. omnipresent" (Althusser, 1984:35). Althusser seems to have derived his notion of "overdetermination" from Freud (Freud & Breuer, 1974: 346). In terms of Althusser's interpretation, ideology exists (already formed in an 'apparatus' or 'structure') before the individual and before class. The notion of "interpellation" hence becomes a general (universal) 'law' of the transcendental/subjective. Thus even when Althusser turns to "class struggle" (Althusser, 1971:171-173) the notion is 'tagged' onto that of "interpellation", almost as an 'afterthought'. For Althusser class struggle is not integrated into the idea of ideological struggle in the way that, say, Volosinov integrated class struggle into his notion of a

"struggle for the sign". Because Volosinov's notion of ideology is based on a totality (subject-object) view, historical material struggle was a part of 'totality' (including the consciousness dimension). Volosinov's notion of ideology and 'the sign' is hence clearly an historical and material one; whereas Althusser's notion of ideology and 'the sign' is non-historical, and hence violates Althusser's own claim to be operating within the premises of historical materialism. It is possible to re-read Althusser so as to 'historicize' his ideas (see Tomaselli, 1988: 18); but such a re-reading must not be conflated with Althusser's own work.

Althusser's work on ideology goes beyond his notion of "interpellation" (ie. 'pure' semiology) as a result of his attempts to 'materialize' his semiology. This took the form of a search for the superstructural structures (ie. apparatuses) within which "interpellation" (ie. the 'semiological' process) took place; ie. the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). The Althusserian notion of ISAs: (a) 'collapsed' the political and ideological dimensions into one another; and (b) placed tremendous emphasis onto 'State' political dimension (Althusser, 1971:134). In this respect Althusser's work overlaps with that of Lukacs, the Frankfurt School and Gramsci. This work has been centrally concerned with the way in which the liberal-pluralist political structures have served to 'legitimate' liberal-capitalism and have apparently 'defused' the 'revolutionary potential' of the European working classes (See Althusser, 1971:141).

Althusser's work on Ideological State Apparatus-Repressive State Apparatus (ISA-RSA) (Althusser, 1971:141-142) bears certain strong resemblance to Gramsci's notion of "hegemony". Althusser's work on these political-ideological superstructures parallel the Gramscian

notion of "hegemony" as a 'fusion' of 'legitimacy' and 'force' (Gramsci, 1971:238 and 247). Althusser, in fact, even uses the term "hegemony" in Gramsci's sense when discussing his ISAs (Althusser, 1971:138-139). Certainly when Althusser is re-read 'through' Gramsci (ie. as done by the CCCS and Tomaselli) it is possible to use his ideas (on ISAs and RSAs) within a leftist praxis concerned with communicative 'struggle'.

Such readings should not obscure the significant differences between Althusser and Gramsci. After all, Gramsci worked from within the humanist-Marxist 'totality' tradition, whereas Althusser explicitly rejected it (Althusser, 1971:129). For Althusser, the political-ideological superstructure is "relatively autonomous" of the base (Althusser, 1971:130), whereas Gramsci assumed the close 'inter-penetration' of base and superstructure.

Despite the differences, Althusser's ideas on ISA/RSA are the one aspect of his work that can be 'integrated' with a Gramscian 'totality' view. This aspect of his work can be used by a reconstructed historical materialism if Althusser is seen as having 'specialized' in one aspect of totality (i.e. the political ideological superstructures). Althusser's structural approach is seen to have caused him to generate a 'specialist' understanding of, and terminology for, grasping the political-ideological superstructures. So, in the same way that the political economy approach can serve a 'totality' reconstructed historical materialism, so too can Althusser's work on the ISAs; ie. he points to the media as important (concrete) 'sites' where ideology -- as 'interpellation' - is produced. These 'sites' need to be analyzed, and Althusser has some interesting insights to

offer in this regard. Tomaselli, Tomaselli & Muller (1987: chapters 1 and 2) have demonstrated Althusser's potential value through their application of his theory of 'interpellation' to the ideological discourse of South African journalists.

'Concrete' structures do exist, both economically and superstructurally. Althusser's notion of ISAs as superstructures has value in directing attention towards these, and his ideas in this regard are not necessarily incompatible with the (leftist-humanist) notion of 'totality':

(a) as long as ISA/RSAs are understood as a 'partial' study of one 'physical part' of the process that is 'totality'. In a sense Althusser's work on 'material ideological apparatus' (Althusser, 1971:158) complements the political economy approach to communication;

(b) Althusser's notion of "relative autonomy" is modified so as to stress the "relative" rather than (as in the case of Althusser) the "autonomy"; and

(c) the implicit functionalism in Althusser's understanding of structures needs to be removed.

For this writer the above can be achieved by interpreting 'totality' metaphorically and diachronically dialectical; but the 'physical parts' (eg. ISAs) of the 'total' process are interpreted synchronically as sometimes 'contradictory' and sometimes 'functional'.

What is being proposed then is that Althusser's idea of 'structure' as "<u>apparatus</u>" need not be seen as necessarily incompatible with Gramsci's 'totality' understanding of hegemony. Gramsci could, in fact, be used to put the 'active subject' back into the superstructural structures identified by Althusser, and at the same time re-insert the dialectic into Althusser (and so remove the 'necessary' functionalism

in Althusser's concepts of 'structures'/ISAs). In other words, Althusser's structuralism can be **used** to help 'disentangle' aspects of the complexity of 'totality'. However, his structuralism will need to be used with care if it is not to clash with the leftist-humanism which, it has been proposed, should underpin the reconstruction of historical materialism. So Althusser's structuralism can be heuristically useful within Marxist communication studies through: (i) its identification of a 'plurality' of ISAs (Althusser, 1971:137); with (ii) each of these ISAs containing a (separate) "practice" (Althusser, 1971:156). Althusser's list of ISAs (Althusser, 1971:137) is not unusable by a reconstructed historical materialism. However, by interpreting Althusser as useful for 'disentangling' totality, his ideas are modified into an 'analytical tool' (ie. a structural approach) rather than a reified 'principle' (ie. structuralism).

Poulantzas' (1979, 1982) ideas can also be integrated, along similar lines, into a reconstructed historical materialism. As a Post-Althusserian, he perpetuates many of the problems that have been identified with Althusser's approach. But at the same time Poulantzas develops Althusser's ideas on the **political-ideological superstructures** in a direction that is partially compatible with Gramsci's approach. Poulantzas developed an understanding of the sub-structures (ie. "class **fractions**") within the larger structures (ie. classes). This is especially useful in South Africa where both the ruling bloc and its main opposition (ANC-SACP-Cosatu) consist of a wide array of shifting alliances, groupings, class interests, sub-class interests, etc. Poulantzian analysis will become especially useful when the conflict between the NP and ANC reaches the 'negotiation-phase'. This will necessitate a close 'reading' of subtle shifts within the alliances

that are a party to the conflict. It could be said that Poulantzas has paid too much attention to the ruling classes instead of the suppressed classes. However, his concentration on the ruling classes does not invalidate Poulantzas's approach. It merely means his ideas on class fractions need to be extended to the suppressed classes. (In this regard see Louw, 1989c).

However, just as in the case of Althusser, Poulantzas' structuralism needs to be modified to interpret the structures he identifies as 'setting parameters' (ie. a structural approach) rather than as being able to determine behaviour (structuralism). In this regard, I will argue for a re-reading of Poulantzas' "class fractions" idea through Gramsci's totality approach. In other words, Gramsci can be used to re-introduce the notion of an active subject, while Poulantzas provides the structural 'categories' which set the 'parameters' within which the subjective operates. In this way both voluntarist subjectivism and (determining) structuralism are avoided.

From a 'totality' approach to the reconstruction of historical materialism there are problems with the Althusserian interpretation. However, in trying to reconstruct this paradigm so that it is in a stronger position to deal with communication, Althusser's theory has to be engaged with. This is because it contains valuable insights and because it breaks ground for leftist communicology. It experimented (not always successfully) with theoretical innovation, and delved into areas that should in future be taken as read (though not necessarily emulated or repeated). It has strongly influenced the CCCS and CCSU/CCMS and thereby represents a significant part of the development curve of learning required in the creation of an historical materialist

approach to the media and communication.

The Birmingham School, and through it, culturalism and Althusserian-structuralism, have certainly been seminal influences in the introduction of a leftist communicology to South Africa. An important reason for this was the establishment of the CCSU where the CCCS was taken as a 'model'. But now there is a need to move beyond the CCCS's concern to merge culturalism and structuralism. A South Africa leftist communicology needs to include: (i) a more explicitly 'praxis' orientation, and (ii) engage 'totality' ideas (as discussed above).

Towards a Leftist Communicology: searching for a way forward

As we enter the 1990s the Left is in crisis. Even the prospect of some leftist gains in South Africa (and Chile) is not enough to cancel out the legacy of Eastern Europe where 'socialism' has been so discredited. A Marxist-Leninist interpretation of leftist praxis has proved to be a highly limiting interpretation of capitalism in the Information Age. This interpretation was incapable of adequately dealing with the superstructural age because of its tendency towards crude materialism. If the left is to seriously meet the challenge of MNC (and its increasingly superstructural relations of production), then leftists will need to move beyond narrow materialism and learn to deal with the superstructures and subjective. Historical materialism needs to be reconstructed in such a way that it not only deals with the material world, but also the subjective world (of communication, media, culture, etc). This calls for the construction of a leftist communicology.

What is more, in an era where there is no longer Soviet support for leftist forces (ie. the implications of glasnost), the left has to

become more creative in finding ways to challenge MNC. For the Left in the margins of MNC (eg. the South African left) who had become complacent in relying on Soviet assistance, this calls for an openness to new approaches to praxis. A Left binding itself to orthodoxy -- Marxist-Leninist, or any other variety -- will become a conservative force, and hence less able to bring about social change. This is especially true given that contemporary capitalist relations of production in the Information Age appear to require a less materialist approach to praxis. The Left needs to construct a theory capable of dealing with communicative (superstructural) domination, resistance and struggle. It is no longer enough to stress the material character of capitalism. The Left now has to deal with "cultural or psychological exploitation as the new ground of conflict" (Clarke et al, 1979:28). And it must deal with these not as derivatives of the economic base, but rather as sites of struggle in their own right.

Re-orientating the Left will, no doubt, reopen some old debates and create new ones. A major struggle for hegemony over the Left may well emerge once more. Only after Marx's interpretation was victorious over Bakunin (Kolakowski, 1981, Vol I: 244-258),following which then the Marxist-Leninist interpretation defeated the Marxist-Bernstein interpretation (Kolakowski, 1981, Vol II: 347-353), did so many on the Left grow theoretically orthodox/conservative, self-satisfied and complacent. The voices of the likes of the Frankfurt School, Korsch and the New Left were seemingly unable to redirect much of the Left's thinking for 70 years. But the events of 1989/90 have changed all that. These events reopened the struggle over what direction the Left should take. What is clear is that the old orthodoxies are no longer tenable. The Left now needs to break with the intellectual habits born

of orthodoxy. There is a need for theoretical experimentation and ever eclecticism. The task of reconstructing leftist praxis and/or constructing a leftist approach to communication/culture will, initially, be an overwhelmingly theoretical exercise. Leftist theory (including Marxist and Marxist-Leninist) will need to be reappraised, 'reshuffled' and reworked.

But any reconstruction of leftist theory and practice will, of necessity, be rooted in a particular context. The questions raised will reflect the problems and challenges of a particular society. This thesis is rooted in the realigning and restructuring Southern Africa of the 1990s. Leftist struggle in Southern Africa has been successful in forcing concessions from the Right. But the Left has not developed sufficient strength to defeat the Right. What is more, given the weak position of the Left in a world wide context, there is little likelihood of it defeating the local (reforming) Right. This 'reforming Right' will be in a position to call on a world-wide MNC/Information Age network of alliances and resources. Unless the Left organizes itself more successfully than was the case during 1990, it faces the prospects of losing its present gains, and of declining fortunes in the medium to long term. The Left even faces the prospect of the co-option by a 'reformed Right'/MNC of significant sectors of those formerly associated with the struggle.

These are the practical and theoretical challenges. Meeting them requires a theory able to grasp the context, the gains and the losses, and able to give direction to leftist praxis appropriate to the times. For the South African Left that means developing a theory able to deal with the position of South Africa as a sub-metropole of MNC (a world-

hegemonic MNC since the collapse of Soviet power); being tied into the 'superstructural' relations of production of the MNC/Information Age, as well as having to overcome the legacy of a now discredited Leninist-Marxist interpretation of leftist praxis (which for many is synonymous with 'the Left').

This thesis proposes, therefore, that the New Left, and its derivative CCS, provide a good starting place for a leftist theoretical reconstruction based upon experimentation and eclecticism. The New Left/CCS already has a record of: (a) pointing out the limitations of the Marxist-Leninist interpretation of the Leftist project and/or warning of the impending collapse of the Marxist dream (that it was predicted would flow from these limitations); (b) drawing upon and synthesizing a wide range of work so as to construct a leftist praxis not limited by orthodoxy, nor tainted by the legacy of East European practices; and (c) dealing with communication, media and the superstructures -- ie. reorienting the Left into a concern with the context of the Information Age.

The Birmingham School's merger of culturalism, structuralism and the work on hegemony provides us with a rudimentary framework and/or method for re-orientating the Left towards communication, culture and the media. However, the selection of theorists utilized by the Birmingham School needs to be widened to incorporate the work of Lukacs, the Frankfurt School (and their heirs), Volosinov and Korsch. By so doing, the pull towards the (anti-rationalist) 'discourse' approach would be lessened, while the influence of the 'totality' approach of a (rationalist) leftist-humanism would be increased.

The theorists dealt with in Chapter 2 of this thesis are, in other words, proposed as one possible reshuffling, evaluative and

reconstructive exercise of leftist theory. However, these theorists only provide us with the basis for a leftist analysis. For a leftist practice another dimension is required. This added dimension will be the theme of Chapter 3.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Marx's development away from Young Hegelianism (McLellan, 1978) was to have a profound impact on the future development of Leftist praxis. Marx's rejection of leftist subjective "criticism" in favour of dealing with "real" (material) conditions on the ground (see Marx & Engels, 1980:192) was, on the one hand, an advantageous insight for the Left since it directed leftists into "real" praxis as opposed to abstract intellectual critique. However, once Marx's interpretation of socialism became hegemonic within the left, his critique of Young Hegelian 'subjectivism' was extended into something of a general injunction against a leftist dealing with the subjective (eg. superstructure). The anti-subjectivism of Marx & Engels (1980) hence NARROWED the left into an almost exclusive concern with the material or objective world. This was eventually collapsed into a crude base-superstructure model in which the subjective/superstructure (eg communication, media, etc) were seen as simply derivative of the material/objective base. This was to ultimately prove very limiting for leftist analysis, and as a result, limiting for praxis based upon such analysis. This limitation became especially problematic once capitalism mutated in such a way that the superstructures became increasingly central to MNC relations of production. At this point (from the 1960s onwards) leftist analysis -- derived from a crude interpretation of Marx & Engels -- was increasingly crisis-ridden because its stock of concepts for dealing with the objective/material context had only a limited explanatory power when turned upon the subjective/superstructure. It was a crisis that the likes of Althusser and Habermas attempted to confront during the 1970s by developing a leftist conceptualization of the subjective.

[2] The Frankfurt School grew within the Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt (1923-1933). It was exiled to the USA (1933-1950) because of the German Nazi period, and returned to Frankfurt in 1950 (Jay, 1973). Many people were associated with the Institute at one time or another -- eg. Horkheimer, Adorno, Lowenthal, Pollock, Fromm, Marcuse, Benjamin, Neumann, Kirschheimer, Grossman, Gurland, etc. However, the 'School' is really only taken to mean the first six names of this above list. During its heyday (1930s and 1940s) the 'School' never really had a coherence, in fact only after 1950 was the earlier work 'recognized' as a 'School'(see Jay, 1973). Those who carried the School's tradition into the contemporary era (although not a 'part' of the School) are Jurgen Habermas, Claus Offe and Albrecht Wellmer.

[3] The 'unintegrated' sectors are, however, important to the Left for

another reason, namely, they are not necessarily 'revolutionary'. The lumpenproletariat, for example, can be extremely reactionary if the left fails to mobilize them. Examples of this are: between 1986 and 1989 the apartheid state employed (for minimal wages) the lumpenproletariat as 'kitskonstables', 'municipal policemen', and (fascist) vigilante forces. (CIIR, 1988). Further, Inkatha has been successful in mobilizing the lumpenproletariat into its structures during 1989 and 1990. These 'unintegrated' sectors, are, in fact, highly susceptible to populist rhetoric.

[4] Tomaselli (1985) has discussed the differences between leftist and rightist intellectuals in the field of South African communication studies.

[5] The degree to which the Right monopolizes the South African media can be seen by comparing the sales of the rightist versus Leftist press in 1990 -- ie. total weekly sales of all the leftist-commercial press amounts to just over 200-thousand. This low penetration of the leftist press should be a matter for a major critical self-appraisal on the part of South African media workers. Total sales of what Pinnock calls the 'guild press' (excluding regionals and rural press) = Dailies sell 6-million copies per week, and Sunday newspapers sell 1,2-million copies per week. Further the Right monopolizes both radio and television broadcasting. What is worse is that this low leftist media penetration may become still lower once foreign funding of the 'alternative press' is ended. (The 1990 reforms have made such termination of financial support very likely).

## Chapter 3. THE SUPERSTRUCTURE AND LEFTIST STRUGGLE: CONSIDERATIONS ON THE "SUBJECTIVE AND PRAXIS"

The accumulation of leftist theory, and of leftist theoretical cadres, is well advanced in South Africa. The theory already 'accumulated' includes, for example: the SACP's 'two-stage' theory of revolution (which probably arose as a South Africanization of Plekanov's Russian 'two-stage' model); and the work of Wolpe (1972); Legassick (1974); Davies et al (1976); Bienfeld & Innes (1976); Innes & Plaut (1979); Lambert (1980); Erwin (1985); Alexander (1985); as well as the innovations forged by 'activists' in each of the three main leftist 'camps', ie. 'popular' (eg. ANC, UDF/MDM); 'populist' (eg. AZAPO, PAC, NEUM/WOSA) and 'workerist' (eg. COSATU) [1].

Despite the 'accumulation' already achieved, more work is still required in the area of reconstructing historical materialism so as to accommodate the following three themes: (1) the subjective and the superstructures as a potential 'site of struggle' within South Africa (as a peripheral player in the MNC/Information Age); (2) the operation of a South African leftist alliance (built on New Leftist rather than 'vanguardist' principles). These above two themes merge, in the sense that 'managing' an alliance requires that attention be paid to 'internal' communication, 'constituency expansion', 'compromise' and the development of 'appropriate' ('public sphere'?) superstructures; and (3) reconceptualizing the notion of leftist struggle to include the 'hegemonic art' of 'negotiation', such that praxis in South Africa is understood as an unpredictable mixture of 'violence', 'negotiation' and 'compromise'. The latter links back to points one and two above, and brings to the fore once again the importance of communication and the superstructures for praxis.

The previous chapter suggested that it would be helpful to give more prominence to historical materialist theorists who had moved away from a narrow economism, and toward a 'totality' approach (ie. the 'material' AND the 'subjective') of leftist struggle. In the South African context this is especially important because the local leftist struggle is more than a struggle against capitalism. It is a struggle against racial-capitalism. This is the basis for the requirement that Leftists pay attention to matters BEYOND a 'material' struggle [2]. The Left needs to pay specific theoretical attention to the superstructures and the relationship between base and superstructure. With this in mind the last chapter tried to formalize and 'South Africanize' the 'recognition' located in the Frankfurt School, Lukacs, Gramsci, Volosinov and CCS that the Left needs to move beyond economism (ie. 'put' the subjective and/or 'totality' into leftist theory).

However, the post-1976 crisis in South Africa demands both theory AND practice. According to Korsch (1970), this couplet requires a symbiotic relationship. There is a need to move <u>beyond</u> <u>both</u> (1) a 'reconstructed' historical materialist concern with the subjective (ie. subject-object debate), and (2) the praxis (theory-practice) debate. The two debates should be <u>linked</u>. Such a linkage would advance the Left's capacity for dealing with (theoretically and practically) the South African context. This requires explicitly developing the notion of a 'totality praxis' -- ie. a praxis that deals with both the subjective and the objective.

Such a 'totality praxis' would accommodate the complexity of leftist struggle in South Africa in which various differing, yet inter-related 'components' to the 'struggle' need attention. Examples of this are: (1) a materialist 'theory' of struggle (eg. Marx, 1974); (2) a

materialist 'practical' struggle (eg. workerist shop floor organization); and (3) the theory-practice 'problematic'. The above three concerns together represent the Marxist interpretation of leftist praxis. A New Leftist 'totality' praxis would, however, go much <u>further</u> (though without 'abandoning' the above three concerns) to develop: (4) a leftist theory of 'the subjective'(ie. Chapter 2) ; (5) a superstructural (or subjective) 'practice'; (6) an understanding of the subject-object 'problematic'. A 'totality praxis' would entail (7) dealing with all the above six in 'unison'.

This chapter is specifically concerned with those aspects of the above 'totality' which, to date, have received scant attention from Leftists, namely: the concern with a 'subjective praxis' -- ie. the above concerns (5) and (6). This will be termed the Korsch-Enzensberger challenge to historical materialism. This includes the theory and practice couplet; while Enzensberger directs attention to the superstructures (subjective) as a site of contradiction and struggle.

That this chapter will concern itself with only (5) and (6) of the above 'complexity' should not be interpreted as a suggestion that concerns (1), (2) and (3) are unimportant. They are vital 'elements' within the 'totality praxis' proposed, but in this chapter they will be taken as 'read'. In other words, the proposed 'totality praxis' is not an exclusive leftist concern with pure 'superstructural' intervention. Such a 'superstructuralism' would represent the same 'idealist' (ie. unmaterialist) view of struggle as that found in Beaufre's (1965) 'total strategy' misunderstanding of 'Marxist struggle'. (A misinterpretation which ironically strongly influenced the NP's anti-

Leftist strategy). Further, it should be noted that concerns (5) and (6) are seen as 'extensions' of concern (4).

At the root of the above proposal then, is the notion that if South African Leftists ignore the 'subjective' then any change produced, and/or leftist hegemony constructed, will probably not result in a 'complete' liberation. (A 'complete' liberation means an 'objective' redistribution of wealth AND the 'subjective' elimination of racism. There is, in other words, a necessity to pay specific attention to challenging and destroying the subjective constructions of racial-capitalism as a fundamental part of liberating South Africa. With the collapse of Soviet power and the subsequent world-hegemony status of MNC, there is now no likelihood of South Africa shaking itself free of MNC hegemony in the foreseeable future (even if a leftist government was voted into power). South Africa will be located on the margins of the MNC/Information Age either as part of the dependent 'South' or as the key sub-metropole of MNC in Africa. In either role, a leftist struggle in South Africa will not be over even with a 'leftist' government in power.

## The Korsch-Enzensberger challenge: the search for superstructural praxis

Korsch offers some useful philosophical insights for any New Leftist attempt to 'reconstruct' historical materialism such that this paradigm can more adequately deal both with the subjective AND with praxis. This is because his Marxism & Philosophy (1971) (first published in 1923) sits astride two central themes in such a 'reconstruction': the concern with the leftist-humanist notion of 'totality'; and the concern with praxis (theory and practice). In some ways, Korsch represents a key to the sort of reconstruction of leftist praxis proposed in this

thesis. Korsch's revisionist reading of Marxism is, in fact, a valuable theoretical adjunct to Gramsci's notion of hegemony as a 'multi-dimensional' leftist struggle.

Hall used Gramsci to link the culturalist and structuralist perspectives. Korsch can be used in a similar fashion to construct a New Leftist politics of subjectivist intervention with a materialist intent. As a humanist-Marxist, Korch sees human existence as a unity of active subjectivity within structural (objective and subjective) constraints. This 'activeness within structural-constraints' takes place in two 'realms' for Korsch: theoretically and practically. The basis of Korsch's argument is that Marxism should be concerned with this 'totality' of subject-object-theory-practice. If this totality is 'broken', he argues, a 'warped' Marxism results. He criticized the Marxist-Leninist interpretation of leftist praxis on these grounds (for which he was attacked at the Third International and subsequently expelled from the German Communist Party).

Korsch's work in the 1920s represented yet another early warning signal predicting the eventual collapse of the Marxist dream unless Leftists revised their programme. For Korsch (1970:43), Marxism should concern itself with the relationship between a subjective "philosophy of revolution", and "real [objective] historical developments". It is neither a theoretical 'belief in socialism' (Korsch, 1970:61) nor a practical intervention in reality (Korsch, 1970:74). Rather it is both in unity. Capitalist society "must be criticized in theory and overthrown in practice" (Korch, 1970:96). He predicted a 'decline' of Marxism as resulting from the granting of autonomy to theory and practice (Korsch, 1970:65). Such a split resulted in: (a) on the one

hand, a **theoretical** dogmatism (i.e. subjectivist belief) (Korsch, 1970:65); and (b) on the other hand a **practically**-oriented Party (Korsch, 1970:74) which was so concerned with intervening and changing the objective-world that it lost its contact with its original theoretical premises. Once theory and practice were granted autonomy from one another, the theoreticians were denied access to reality. This reduced their theoretical work to a form of dogmatic-idealism, which, because it no longer dealt with concrete problems, ceased to have practical revolutionary significance. On the other hand, the 'Marxist' practitioners became so engrossed with solving practical-objective problems that they 'forgot' and often violated their original theoretical 'ideals'. A Korschian analysis would trace the origins of Stalinism to this trend (See Korsch, 1970:130-136). The crisis and then collapse of Second World 'state socialism' not even seven decades after Korsch's predictions, goes a long way towards vindicating his work.

If Korsch's ideas are applied to a reconstructed historical materialism concerned with developing a South African approach to communicative praxis, the following general parameters result:

* Both theory and practice are required; such that
* ('reconstructed') theory informs practice; and
* practice informs theory.
* Over-theoreticism (where theoreticans work in isolation from leftist activists) is avoided. Both those following the Frankfurt School and the Althusserians tend in this 'isolationist' direction); and an overly-practical approach (eg. where activists do not concern themselves with theory) is avoided; yet
* a degree of 'functional' specialization in theory (eg. at the

CCSU/CCMS) and practice (eg. at Grassroots, New Nation, etc) is accepted and even encouraged; but that

* both the theory and the practice produced need to be 'linked' in a mutually re-inforcing programme of leftist praxis.

If we apply these ideas to leftist communication/media work the following scenario emerges. A Korschian praxis would require, amongst other things, that structured relationships be developed between leftist media workers and academics; that theoreticians should 'get their hands dirty'; that media workers provided with training in 'theory'; and that any 'insights' developed in the course of leftist media production be systematically 'recorded', 'theoretized' and disseminated through a national 'training' network.

However, to make full use of Korsch within a superstructurally-oriented leftist praxis, it is valuable to link Korsch's theory-practice notion to Enzensberger's more explicitly media-centric work. Enzensberger (1974) has explicitly argued for an explicitly praxis-oriented approach to the media and culture industry.

Enzensberger's (somewhat Maoist) challenge to historical materialists (See Louw, 1985) was built around the theme that "so far there is no Marxist theory of the media" (Enzensberger, 1974:96). Although somewhat over-stated, this observation represents an important recognition of the expanding 'superstructural nature' of capitalist relations of production within the Information Age. By the 1970s -- when Enzensberger produced his challenge -- the growing superstructuralism of capitalism in the First World was becoming apparent. It was a phenomenon, as Enzensberger noted, to which Marxist-Leninist 'practitioners' paid too little attention.

Enzensberger thus made a call to Leftists to engage in cultural struggle. It represents in particular a concern specifically tied up with counter-hegemonic work. Further, one sees in the call an attempt to challenge a leftist-theoretical tendency within his own historical material context -- ie. West Germany and the USA-- towards a 'passive' radical theoreticism derived form the Frankfurt School's influence on media-scholarship. Enzensberger, in fact, serves as a useful 'link' between the work of the Frankfurt School and the culturalists. This is because his notion of a 'consciousness industry' is strongly derived from the Frankfurt School's work (on the 'culture industry'). Enzensberger's 'voluntaristic' approach, however, sits more easily with culturalist 'activism' of the Tomaselli (1986b) variety.

South Africa entered the Information Age relations of production much later than the USA or West Germany. The 1980s have seen South Africa begin to be integrated in a peripheral way (Tomaselli, R., 1989). However, there is no doubt that the South African left will need to increasingly learn to deal with Information Age relations of production and its associated ideological manipulation. Even a government in South Africa using leftist rhetoric would not in reality be able to shake itself free of MNC/Information Age relations of production, given the contemporary balance of forces in the world. Consequently, Enzensberger's ideas have resonance in a contemporary South Africa where the need is for theoretically-guided 'action' against: the ideological machinery of the reforming-Right (and their world-wide MNC allies); as well as against the 'subjective' legacy of decades of apartheid ideology.

Enzensberger's communicative praxis is derived from his notion that Marx's method, developed viz-a-viz the 'economic system', can be

'transferred' to the study of the media and other superstructures. But this 'transference' does not take the form of the Althusserian attempt to read 'structure' into the subjective. Rather, it is a less pretentious search for 'media' contradictions. As Bennett (in Gurevitch, 1983:149) notes, such a leftist inquiry into communication and media would be:

> motivated by the need to furnish a knowledge of their workings that can be put to use in the production of subversive signifying systems which might offset the effects of dominant ideology and contribute to the formation of a revolutionary consciousness within oppressed social groups and classes.

Or, as Enzensberger (1974:96) puts it:

> Monopoly capitalism develops the consciousness-shaping industry more quickly and more extensively than other sectors of production: it must at the same time fetter it. A socialist media theory has to work at this contradiction, demonstrate that it cannot be sold within the given productive relationships -- rapidly increasing discrepancies, potential destructive forces.

A number of points need to be highlighted in Enzensberger's suggested 'praxis' approach to the media:

Firstly, his suggested praxis requires locating through analysis, contradictions within capitalism, and 'using' these (see Enzensberger, 1974:99-100). This approach to communication would consist of: (a) (reconstructed) historical material analysis; which (b) aims to understand the workings, weaknesses and contradictions within the rightist hegemony; in order that (c) such analysis helps in weakening of the rightist hegemony; and (d) helps in finding ways to establish a leftist-hegemony.

Secondly, Enzensberger does not see capitalism as an 'evil' that must be avoided for fear of contamination (an attitude which certain Frankfurt School members adopted). An Enzensbergian communicology would consequently not be content with critique in a passive sense.

Rather, it proposes that Leftists 'get their hands dirty' by participating in the MNC/Information Age media system. By extension into the South African context, a 'purist' argument for a 'boycott' of racial-capitalist infrastructures (eg. SABC/SABC-TV) and 'dirty' (capitalist) money, is naive. Hence Enzensberger proposes a 'voluntarism' in which an attempt must be made to try and find a realistic method of acting so as to oppose the rightist order from within. Instead of seeing MNC as entirely evil, Enzensberger sees it as a potentially 'progressive' force that has helped create the 'opportunities for creating a leftist hegemony.

Applying these notions specifically to the media, Enzensberger (1974:97) says:

> For the first time in history, the media are making possible mass participation in a social and socialized productive process, the practical means of which are in the hands of the masses themselves.

This is clearly evident in South Africa, where developments in the electronic media (eg. word processors; laser printers; computer networking; tape recorders; photostat machines; video; etc) have opened up possibilities for constructing democratic leftist communication, eg. in the form of local-level participative democracy (see Nigg & Wade, 1980). Some of these possibilities have already been exploited by South African leftists (see Pinnock, 1991; Gorfinkel, 1989), despite right-wing counter-action; others require to be exploited. All can be used to a greater extent than is the case at present.

Enzensberger notes how many of the 'possibilities' inherent in the new Information technologies have been blocked by <u>both</u> MNC and (Soviet) state socialist ruling elites because of their own self-interest (Enzensberger, 1974:97, 105). The blockage in the Second World was

especially acute, resulting in the Soviet bloc's incapacity to keep up with MNC. Enzensberger criticizes Leftists like the Frankfurt School who merely criticize this state of affairs but do nothing to actually 'engage' the problem. He states:

> The liberal superstition that in political and social questions there is such a thing as pure, unmanipulated truth seems to enjoy remarkable currency among the socialist Left. It is the unspoken basic premise of the manipulation thesis. This thesis provides no incentive to push ahead ... To cast the enemy in the role of the devil is to conceal the weakness and lack of perspective in one's own agitation. If the latter leads to self isolation instead of mobilizing the masses, then its failure is attributed holus-bolus to the overwhelming power of the media" (1974:101) ... [and] ... These resistances and fears are strengthened by a series of cultural factors which, for the most part, operate unconsciously, and which are to be explained by the social history of the participants in today's Left movement -- namely their bourgeois class background. It often seems as if it were precisely because of their progressive potential that the media are felt to be an immense threatening power: because for the first time they present a basic challenge to bourgeois culture and thereby to the privileges of the bourgeois intelligensia -- a challenge far more radical than any self-doubt this social group can display. In the New Left's opposition to the media, old bourgeois fears such as the fear of "the masses" seem to be re-appearing along with the equally old bourgeois longings for pre-industrial times dressed up in progressive clothing" (Enzensberger, 1974:102).

Enzensberger instead calls for 'practice'; and if necessary Machiavellian 'activism'. He makes the point that, "there is no such thing as unmanipulated writing, filming, or broadcasting. The question is not thereafter whether the media are manipulated, but who manipulates them" (1974:104). Leftists should 'recognize' this point and seek to 'use' it to advance leftist praxis. In other words, "a revolutionary plan should not require the manipulators to disappear: on the contrary, it must make everyone a manipulator" (Enzensberger, 1974:104). This position represents a key leftist insight in the Information Age: information technology is able to provide creative Leftists with the potential basis upon which to construct a leftist civil society based upon a participative grassroots democracy (ie. a

practical implementation of a 'public sphere'). This point will be developed in Chapter 6. To some extent the South African based Grassroots model is an example of how media technology can be used by Leftists to activate a mass grassroots leftist democracy (see Louw, 1989a; and Johnson, 1991; and Pinnock 1991). So for Enzensberger, the information technology created by MNC needs to be democratically appropriated and adapted by Leftists. However, Enzensberger's (1974:116) contention is that:

> With a single great exception, that of Walter Benjamin (and in his footsteps, Brecht,), Marxists have not understood the consciousness industry and have been aware only of its bourgeois-capitalist dark side and not of its socialist possibilities.

That Enzensberger pointed to a serious gap in leftist praxis there is no doubt. However, he did overstate his case because examples can be found of attempts to utilize the media and communication for leftist practice -- eg. in Europe (see Nigg & Wade, 1980); Chile (Mattelart & Siegelaub, 1983); South Korea (Kim, 1988); Philippines (Dionisio, 1986; Cruz, 1986; and Murphy, 1986); Nicaragua (Mattelart, 1986; and Broadbent, 1988); and South Africa (Patel, 1985; Tomaselli 1986; Tomaselli & Louw, 1988; and Louw, 1989a; and Mackay & Louw, 1990). None-the-less, more can certainly be done, and Enzensberger's work points to the fact that communication remains an under-developed area in leftist praxis. What is certainly noteworthy is that more has been done on a world-wide basis to promote the type of communication advocated by Enzensberger by radical-liberals and progressive Christians (see Media Development; and Group Media Journal; especially White, 1980; and White 1983) than by Marxists. This only serves to verify Enzensberger's critique.

For Enzensberger (1974:15), Leftists who 'opt out' of participating

in the "Mind Industry" are de facto adopting a "reactionary course". For Enzensberger, the materialist 'theoretical purity' of Marxism is unacceptable. Ironically such theoretical purity was the reason Marx attacked the left Hegelians. He felt that their 'radical critique' remained at the level of 'theory', and was consequently meaningless in terms of altering the real world. How ironic then that after the Marxist interpretation became hegemonic within the left, this approach should itself fail to keep pace with the altering real world of a MNC/Information Age.

An Enzensbergian 'praxis' adopts the Machiavellian view that if the Right 'plays dirty', the answer is to 'play dirty' right back, using whatever means were available. In South African terms, such logic leads to the conclusion that a 'purist-based' boycott of racial-capitalist superstructures (eg. SABC; state educational and cultural bodies; etc); theoretical purity (theoreticism) and 'critique'; or even exile and/or emigration, may well be reactionary courses to adopt. The answer is engaging instead with the 'consciousness industry' and trying to co-opt even the 'dirtiest' of infrastructures.

Hence an Enzensbergian communicology will look at each new 'development' for the 'possibilities' it offers. It does not adopt a Luddite mentality: it refuses a 'return' to past forms of culture. Rather, existing communication and cultural forms would be examined for their Leftist possibilities within a process of leftist aufhebung (see Avineri, 1968:37). Enzensberger's specific 'innovation' in this regard was to seek out superstructural contradictions internal to MNC/Information Age relations of production (Enzensberger, 1974:97-100), as opposed to the traditional historical materialist concerns

with material (economic) contradictions.

Enzensberger directs attention to the need to try and 'theoretically' and 'analytically' locate a whole new range of potential MNC/Information Age 'contradiction-areas' ignored by historical materialists. I will mention merely six of these.

(i) As Enzensberger notes, capitalism, in terms of its own inner logic, has to keep expanding. In its MNC form it is 'compelled' to create new superstructural innovation (eg., satellite-communication, videotext, photostat machines; computers; tape recorders; videos, etc.). All these new developments can be used by Leftists. It is difficult for the Right to control this without damaging the economy (Enzensberger, 1974:98-99). (In fact, were they to try it would presumably lead to economic contradictions with MNC). During the 1980s these sorts of gaps were, in fact, exploited by some South African leftists (see Pinnock, 1989).

(ii) These superstructural 'gaps' can be used to 'expose' people to leftist ideas. An example would be the way in which Marx's theory (developed in Victorian England) has been superstructurally 'transferred' to Russia, and South Africa, where these ideas have had enormous social impacts. Ironically, the existing order closes these 'gaps' (ie. 'censorship') at its own peril, because by such action it blinds itself.

(iii) The 'gaps' can be used for leftist rhetoric. To do this, Leftists would benefit by 'familiarizing' themselves with the culture industry 'techniques' of advertising and public relations. In South Africa the Left has generally given insufficient attention to developing activists familiar with the practices of the 'mainstream' media and/or public relations. This does not mean uncritically

adopting the media practices of the mainstream capitalist media (which Mattelart warns against); rather it means a pragmatic recognition that competing with the Right may mean having to 'get one's hands dirty'. This has been one of the reasons the ANC, for example, has acquired such a poor media profile during 1990 [3] -- ie. the media has been poorly used. (Organizations like DMTG have been (unsuccessfully) attempting to redress this problem (see DMTG's 1990 Annual Report). During a 'negotiation-based' struggle the failure to develop a good media profile (while the NP invests considerable energy in this direction) places the Left at a real disadvantage.

Of course, only seeking to use the South African 'mainstream' media would never be sufficient for the Left. It also needs to develop an explicitly leftist media parallel to the mainstream media. This requires exploiting all available information technology to develop leftist 'gaps'. During the 1980s the South African left did make moves in this direction with the establishment of various forms of leftist press (see Chapter 5); leftist audio-visual production units (eg. Audio Visual Alternatives and cassette tapes (see Gorfinkel, 1989); leftist media training projects (Grassroots 1984, 1984a, and 1986; CECS, n/d; Pinnock, 1990; and Mackay & Louw, 1990); and leftist media unions such as FAWO, NOVAW, ADJ, MWASA (Raubenheimer, 1991). However, in general such activities have remained 'small' and 'marginal' in relation to general leftist praxis.

Developing such 'gaps' also serves to tie down rightist resources within the Left-Right struggle. If the Right wants to shut down these gaps it will require some investment of resources (eg. people-power, and finance) to create and maintain a censorship mechanism. In any

'attrition-type' war this would, as Enzensberger might predict, exact a toll on a hegemony both in terms of wasted resources and lost legitimacy. In South Africa, in fact, such attempts at censorship, especially during the 1980s, did serve to damage the legitimacy of the NP with its overseas (liberal-capitalist) backers and elements of the internal liberal-bourgeoisies and petit bourgeoisie. This loss of legitimacy did contribute to the application of sanctions, and hence contributed to forcing the NP to the negotiating table.

(iv) The 'gaps' could also be used to create the sort of social dialogue (or 'public sphere') proposed by Habermas. In certain specific historical material circumstances, such a 'public sphere' may assist in furthering social change. An example would be the period 1982 to 1985 in South Africa when, in an attempt to set up its Tricameral system, the NP had to 'open up' society. This created the 'space' for the growth of the UDF and to set up leftist media projects. The resultant 'public sphere' produced by such projects as Grassroots did serve to 'politicize' and 'radicalize' many people. Attempts from 1986 to 1989 to shut down or narrow such gaps: (1) harmed the (already bad) overseas image of the NP; (2) served to alienate potential internal NP allies (eg. the liberal bourgeoisies and petit bourgeoisies); and (3) could not, in any event, undo the politicization and 'democratization' of consciousness already achieved.

(v) A Korsch-Enzensberger approach can also explain how, in certain specific historical material circumstances, even capitalist advertising could (inadvertently) help a leftist counter-hegemony. For example, capitalism requires the selling of products to an ever widening market. This leads to a superstructural phenomenon called advertising. Advertising can create 'expectations' which the capitalist base then

cannot fulfill. This, in turn, can lead to social conflict and change. This very contradiction has turned into a real problem for the NP, because their attempts since the early 1980s to create a black middle class as a 'buffer', served to create expectations wider than the 'target' group which racial-capitalism did not have the resources to fulfill. But once implementation of the strategy was underway the NP could not abandon it without catalyzing even more 'unrest'.

(vi) The NP set up a political police network to gather intelligence, create mis-information and repress its leftist opposition. This NSMS information-gathering network (of the SP, NIS and DCI), however, opened up the possibility of deliberate leftist manipulation through the introduction of misinformation into the network -- ie. a mixture of 'truths', half-truths' and 'untruths'. (For example, when phones were 'bugged' left-activists were able to feed mis-information to those monitoring the phones).

In addition to such 'superstructural opportunities', there is a problem with Enzensberger's position -- namely it can lend itself to an interpretation wherein the superstructures are seen as the only site for leftist practice. This would violate the 'totality' approach to reconstructing historical materialism proposed by this thesis. Enzensberger 1974: 67) moves too close to a superstructuralist position when he argues:

> The mind industry is growing faster than any other, not excluding armaments. It has become the key industry in the twentieth century. Those who are concerned in the power game of today, political leaders, intelligence men, and revolutionaries, have well grasped this crucial fact. When an industrially developed country is occupied or liberated today, whenever there is a coup d'etat, a revolution, or a counterrevolution, the crack police units, paratroopers, and guerilla fighters do not any longer descend on the main squares of the city or seize the centres of heavy industry, as in the nineteenth century, or symbolic sites like the

> royal palace; the new regime will instead take over, first of all, the radio and television stations, the telephone and telex exchanges, and the printing presses. And after having entrenched itself, it will, by and large, leave alone those who manage the public services and the manufacturing industries, at least in the beginning, while all the functionaries who run the mind industry will be immediately replaced. In such extreme situations the industry's key position becomes quite clear.

Enzensberger has certainly recognized the shift of capitalism into Information Age relations of production. However, the problem is Enzensberger then goes on to over-privilege the superstructures. MNC is not exclusively a superstructural mode of production -- ie. objective material conditions (and contradictions) have not disappeared. Enzensberger can be read as an abandonment of the material world. It is this same sort of superstructuralism which, for example, leads to his over-estimating the importance of media within a revolution or a coup d'etat (Enzensberger, 1974:7). Communication cannot cause a revolution on its own, no matter how effective it is. By extension, neither can communication prevent a revolution, as the NP's WHAM-strategists at one stage seemed to believe (see Louw & Tomaselli, 1990c).

This is where Korsch's ideas come in. Korsch offers a way to 'correct' Enzensberger's over-emphasis on the subjective. A 'balanced' (Korschian) praxis would be undertaken as a '<u>whole</u>' (subjective <u>and</u> objective). In other words, from a Korschian perspective, even if communication (rhetoric and dialogue) can potentially assist social change; a praxis based on the subjective intervention is not enough on its own. Communication can assist in bringing about social change, but must never be mistaken for a 'full' praxis. Praxis requires that the role of material-objective struggle also be accorded its place in the 'total' struggle. A Korschian approach would seek praxis in both

(subjective and objective) terms simultaneously: it would consciously avoid creating two 'sets' of praxis -- one 'voluntaristic' and 'subjective' (such as the struggle proposed by Lukacs, Gramsci, Habermas, Enzensberger); and one economically-determined (such as the struggle proposed by orthodox economistic-Marxists.

A meshing of Korsch and Enzensberger into a leftist-humanist approach to communication would:

Firstly, explicitly incorporate the historical material premise that one needs to understand the superstructure(s) [4] within the context of a relationship with the objective-base. A Korschian-Enzensbergian praxis would be based on a 'totalistic' view of existence that incorporates both the subjective and objective, but which avoids subjectivism and objectivism.

Secondly, the approach would seek to accommodate historical materialist studies concerned with how humans 'make' their world materially, and are 'made by' this world in the same process.

Thirdly, the approach could accommodate studies of economic contradictions (such as those discussed by Marx).

Fourthly, by directing attention to the study of how humans also construct (and are constructed by) their world in the superstructures, the approach would thereby open up the possibilities of identifying superstructural contradictions. A superstructural praxis could take the form of either creating leftist media, and/or 'infiltrating' and 'exploiting' the 'gaps' and 'contradiction' within rightist media.

In the fifth place, the approach offers an alternative to pure superstructuralist approaches (either in the form of a leftist 'pure' Enzensbergianism, or a rightest WHAM approach). Such superstructuralist approaches are at best 'partial' because of their

underemphasis (or ignoring) of objective conditions.

However, in the sixth place, the combined theories direct attention to both superstructural contradictions and communication as another site of leftist action. In other words, the MNC superstructure(s) are recognized as being potentially useful to the Left.

Such a 'turn to the superstructure' as a 'site' of practical struggle opens up, for Leftists, a multitude of potential communicative concerns, ranging from satellites to signs [5]. Undoubtedly, however, the key practical concern for contemporary Leftists is to come to terms with the Information (superstructural) Age; and to learn to use every available superstructural 'gap' as a potential site of struggle.

What the combined theory does not address, however, is the 'nature' of the communicative practice within such a struggle. To be more specific, the superstructure could be 'used' either as (1) a leftist '<u>rhetorical tool</u>', or (2) as a fulcrum for '<u>democratic action</u>' in leftist hegemony construction. The former would lend itself more towards a valuable adjunct for a Leninist vanguardist approach, while the latter would neatly complement a New leftist approach to leftist struggle. (The latter can be seen in the work of Mattelart and Habermas). Of course, in reality, the above two 'options' do not present leftist activists with such a clear-cut (zero-sum) choice. Rather, in the real South African leftist struggle, there will be a 'blurring' between the 'rhetorical' and 'dialogical' options. However, for the purposes of discussion, this writer will proceed to deal with the various (epistemological) contributions to 'media practice' in term of this dichotomy.

The Leninist Option: the superstructure, struggle and rhetoric

Lenin's ideas sit rather uneasily within a New Leftist (ie. democratic leftist) interpretation of praxis. However, his work cannot be ignored because his interpretation of leftist praxis does represent a central part of the leftist legacy. Lenin is significant in any consideration of the value of a rhetorical approach to leftist superstructural action.

The media formed an important -- almost central (CCL, nd:27) -- component of Lenin's revolutionary strategy. His work is an excellent example of what can be achieved by applying an alertness to 'possibilities' (Enzensberger's idea of 'gaps') available within the 'totality' of base and superstructure(s). But Lenin's was an astute practical 'political' alertness rather than an explicitly theoretically-derived alertness. It was his over-emphasis on practice, and under-emphasis on theory which Korsch would argue led to the (Stalinist) deformation of socialism. Despite this problem, however, in the development of 'Marxist communication', Lenin did produce work of value to any rhetorical 'superstructural praxis' (albeit work that can be appropriated by either rightist or Leftist rhetoriticians).

From a communication theory perspective, Lenin's ideas on the media are rather under-developed. This is hardly surprising considering: (a) Lenin was concerned with (revolutionary) political organization and not with communication per se; and (b) a specific concern with communication theory had still to be developed in any form (Leftist, or otherwise). Lenin, in fact, adopted a Machiavellian attitude to the media. It was mainly to be used for organization of a vanguardist revolutionary party; and secondarily as a rhetorical device. Although this writer would argue that Leftists need to go beyond vanguardism and

rhetoric (ie. a concern for 'democracy' is also called for), the Machiavellian approach to communication also has a role to play in leftist struggle. This is perhaps especially true when Leftists face Far-Rightist hegemonies (eg. South Africa prior to 1990; and Tsarist Russia). However, that Lenin's ideas on communication were so underdeveloped was a contributory factor in the 1980s crisis of Marxism in Eastern Europe because it led to an institutionalized form of communication that served to undermine democratic socialist ideals.

Lenin's work on the media has to be understood in the context of his trying to organize a revolutionary party in the face of Tsarist security police action. In other words, it was to be used as a means to an end (CCL, nd: 21 and 23). That end was building an organization and generating rhetoric. For Lenin, running a newspaper offered a means of achieving a number of <u>different</u> organizational goals through <u>one</u> particular practice. Firstly, he saw newspapers as a means of <u>propaganda</u>. Secondly, newspapers were a means of <u>organizing</u> a Party infrastructure. These two (propaganda and organization) were, however, seen by Lenin as two sides of the same coin, because organization involved:

* A "gathering" process (CCL, nd:107) of revolutionary forces; and
* A training of those who had been 'gathered' in collective and organizing work. Propaganda, in its turn, could be used to create a 'sense of belonging'; (ie. an organizational requirement), and to educate those gathered:
* a diffusion throughout the organization of (Lenin's interpretation of) Marxist theory; and
* that all should be trained to be continually on the look-out for

social contradictions and be prepared to take advantage of such contradictions.

In other words, for Lenin the 'propaganda' and 'educational' functions of newspapers served organizational ends; while organizing a newspaper itself served the purpose of (i) generating practical organizational experience (i.e. an educational function); and (ii) creating a nation-wide revolutionary network. These Leninist ideas were of obvious practical value in the development of an underground organization (eg. the ANC or SACP during the years when they were banned).

The heart of the Leninist approach to communication is contained in his statement in Where to Begin that:

> The role of a newspaper is not limited solely to the dissemination of ideas, to political education, and to the enlistment of political allies. A newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, it is also a collective organizer. In this last respect it may be likened to the scaffolding round a building under construction, which marks the contours of the structure and facilitates communication between the builders, enabling them to distribute the work and to view the common results achieved by their organized labour. With the aid of the newspaper, and through it, a permanent organization will naturally take shape that will engage, not only in local activities, but in regular general work, and will train its members to follow political events carefully, appraise their significance and their effect on the various strata of the population, and develop effective means for the revolutionary party to influence those events. The mere technical task of regularly supplying the newspaper with copy and of promoting regular distribution will necessitate a network of local agents of the united party, who will maintain constant contact with one another, know the general state of affairs, get accustomed to performing regularly their detailed functions in the All-Russia work, and test their strength in the organization of various revolutionary actions. This network of agents will form the skeleton of precisely the kind of organization we need -- one that is sufficiently large to embrace the whole country; sufficiently broad and many sided to effect a strict and detailed division of labour; sufficiently well tempered to be able to conduct steadily its own work under any circumstances, at all "sudden turns", and in the face of contingencies; sufficiently flexible to be able, on the one hand, to avoid an open battle against an overwhelming enemy, when the enemy has concentrated all its forces at one spot, and yet, on the other hand, to take advantage of his unwieldiness and to attack him where he least's

expects it" (CCL, nd: 39-40).

So Lenin approached the media from the perspective of an organizational (ie. Party) man concerned with revolutionary practice, not revolutionary theory. His approach to the press was that of a practical Marxist politician. This is reflected in his concern for the following sorts of practical issues:

* how newspaper work can help train Communist Party organizers (CCL, nd: 101-102);
* how newspaper work can help identify and train Communist Party leadership (CCL, nd: 102);
* how newspapers can be used to teach Leninist-Marxist theory (CCL, nd: 21 and 60-61);
* how newspaper work can be used to train those involved to: think 'politically' (CCL,nd:103); learn to be organizationally flexible (CCL, nd:118); learn to cope with security police pressures (CCL, nd:91 and 120); and learn to solve practical organizational problems;
* how newspaper work can be used to develop new (non-bourgeois) work practices (CCL, nd: 141);
* how newspaper work can be used to develop a two-way flow of information ie.: (a) the 'vanguard' leadership (in Lenin's case, an exile leadership) can communicate with their supporters (CCL, nd: 71); and (b) how local newspaper workers can collect local information and so keep the leadership informed (CCL, nd:95);
* how local Party organizations can best use the centrally produced newspaper in terms of their local needs (CCL, nd:139);
* how a centrally controlled (by the 'vanguard') newspaper can be used as a Communist Party unifier (CCL,nd:8-9); through creating

a 'sense of belonging' (CCL, nd:109-110) amongst the revolutionary Party members constructed upon the basis of a populism (CCL, nd:74-75);

* the idea of using the media for self-critique (CCL, nd: 142-143) and to encourage a debate amongst the left alliance (CCL, nd: 20 and 25);
* the need to use limited resources in the most 'cost-effective' way (CCL, nd: 96-97 and 112); which meant he favoured one centralized press, not many (localized) presses (CCL, nd:90 and 94);
* he recognized the need to show sufficient flexibility to use the legal media and conventional media practices where this was possible and useful (CCL, nd: 98);
* the preparedness to use all methods -- including arms -- in an integrated, or "entire system of struggle" (CCL, nd:36) which would include the media. In this regard, Lenin's practical concern with how to centrally organize and plan the entire range of methods used is of importance in understanding Lenin's work. This is particularly important viz a viz his ideas on the media because he saw the media-distribution network as central to his planned 'integration mechanism' (CCL, nd:39);
* Lenin's own flexibility was displayed in his preparedness to concede a certain amount of local 'autonomy' to Party workers with regard to leaflet production (CCL, nd:43 and 46 and 93), and with regard with how they used the centrally produced newspaper (CCL, nd: 139). His distinction between: (a) a newspaper as a central organ of Communist Party unity and teacher of theory; and

(b) leaflets as a method of local exposure and agitation (CCL, nd: 89-93) is an interesting example of Lenin's practical approach to the media, wherein his own centralized power base is retained, but not in so rigid a way that local issues cannot be exploited.

The most important feature of Lenin's theory of the media is that it is a conception of communication that favours rhetoric. From a practical point of view (ie. in view of the Tsarist regime Lenin proposed) this may make sense. However, from the perspective of a democratic-socialism, it is a problematic of communication strategy, especially if inertia sets in (ie. even if such a communication strategy was acceptable while fighting the Tsarist regime, was it an appropriate communication to institutionalize after the Left had defeated the White Armies, and were solidly in power?). From a New Leftist perspective, Leninist communication is problematic because it violates the principles of democratic dialogue (see Habermas, 1974). It is an inherently top-down communication which negates mass democratic participation in social policy formation. Mattelart (1980) has, of course, argued for a dialogical communication strategy to complement the idea of a democratic socialism. One can, in fact, even see a tension in Lenin's writing between his view that (i) a Leftist all-class (populist) alliance be constructed based upon intra-Party democratic dialogue; and (ii) his argument for a centralized rhetoric-producing Party. Lenin was primarily concerned with practical problems, and so was prepared to 'suspend' Marxist ideals when practical considerations 'necessitated' this. The outcome, however, was the development in Eastern Europe of a communication system that only served to 'blind' the communist ruling elites about the actual

conditions in their own societies. Instead of facilitating social dialogue the communication infrastructures became de facto uni-directional (and top-down). This served to: cut the ruling elite off from grassroots feeling. For the East European Left this communication infrastructure became a closed circuit within which self-confirming ideas circulated. This ultimately discredited Leninist-socialism in Eastern Europe due to the lack of opportunity the average person was given to feel a sense of participation in a meaningful social discourse.

The Leninist-rhetorical option 'violates' the democratic-socialist interpretation of leftist praxis. However, it must be recognized that this approach may be sound 'practical politics' in certain contexts. (In fact, it constitutes the only practical leftist option in some contexts other than accepting defeat). For example, under the repression of the States of Emergency in South Africa between 1986 and 1989, operating an open democratic oppositional communication became more and more difficult. As a result, the NP, in effect, compelled the left to adopt a Machiavellian mode of communication and organization. The danger of such situations is that undemocratic practices become 'ingrained'. An adjustment away from these practices becomes difficult once they are no longer required. The USSR appears to have experienced such inertia.

A possible key to prevent the 'permanent' abandoning of the 'ideal' of democratic socialism would be for the theory-practice relationship to be explicitly kept in mind at all times. In other words, when the ideal (ie. in communication terms: democratic-leftist dialogue) is being 'violated' due to practical conditions, this 'suspension' of

theory should be (a) acknowledged; (b) recognized as 'temporarily' necessary; and (c) the situation continually re-appraised in order that, if conditions improve, the practically-necessitated deviation from theory can be abandoned. One means of achieving this is to train leftist media workers in: 'non-ideal' rhetorical (Machiavellian) communication methods, as well as an 'ideal' (leftist-democratic) communication theory. (This point will be developed further in Chapter 6). This should help prevent the retention (due to inertia) of any Leninist-type practices beyond when these are practically required.

Beyond Rhetoric: constructing a leftist media for a mass participatory democracy

Rhetoric will play a part in any struggle. However, there is no need to stop there. If the aim is the production of a democratic socialism, then rhetoric is not enough. For Leftists the key is to consider ways of mobilizing communication and the media not as rhetorical tools, but as as a form of democratic action (or social dialogue). This chapter briefly examines the ideas of three theorists who have produced important work in this area, namely:

i. Enzensberger's call to seek out and use all technological opportunities produced by capitalism as both contradictions and/or mechanisms to further the production of a mass participative democracy.

ii. Mattelart's work on popular communication, and

iii. Habermas' work in the areas of the 'public sphere' and 'legitimation crisis'.

Enzensberger's call for mass participation in the media

> The question is not whether the media are manipulated, but who manipulates them. A revolutionary plan should not require the manipulators to disappear; on the contrary, it must make everyone [my emphasis] a manipulator (Enzensberger, 1974:104).

In this statement Enzensberger throws out a number of challenges. These include: (1) by insisting the "everyone" be made a manipulator, Enzensberger, de facto rejects the Leninist vanguard rhetorical approach (2). He offers an implicit rejection of Frankfurt School critical passivity; (3) implies a hegemony-building process of the New Leftist/Eurocommunist variety; and (4) specifically directs attention to the media as a site of democratic leftist action. Yet Enzensberger is also a 'bridge' between many different historical materialist approaches to communication/media (ironically, these include some of which he does not approve) because his approach 'overlaps' with a number of different ideas. Examples of these are the Frankfurt School's 'culture industry'; Gramsci's ideas on hegemony; the culturalist theory of an active popular culture; Althusser's notion of ISAs; Mattelart's idea of 'popular' communication; Habermas' arguments on a legitimation crisis and a public sphere. In a way, he also draws upon Lenin's radical media interventionism.

Enzensberger' challenge is primarily based upon his reading of Benjamin (1973), who called for radicals to make full use of whatever technological possibilities existed to further the cause of socialism and democracy -- ie. a rejection of 'boycotting' structures disapproved of. For Enzensberger (1974:116) this means that "the Marxist Left should ... develop in depth all the liberatory factors" inherent in contemporary media technology as developed by capitalism. According to Enzensberger, it was to Benjamin's credit that he (as a Frankfurt

School 'dissident') recognized in capitalist superstructural ('culture industry') developments not merely another form of domination, but also new sites of contradictions and 'possibilities' for Leftists to use (Enzensberger, 1974: 119-121).

Three assumptions underpinning Enzensberger's work could be profitably incorporated into a praxis-oriented New Leftist reconstruction of historical materialism. These are:

i. The challenge to turn away from economism and to seek out and exploit the 'revolutionary potential' of the superstructure. Enzensberger (1974:9) attacks Marxists who have not attempted to deal with the superstructure and its contradictions, for being "inept". One could go further and suggest that this Marxist ineptitude to keep up with developments in superstructural relations of production ultimately proved to be a significant factor leading to the collapse of Eastern European state socialism.

ii. His recognition that the media themselves are possible sites of conflict is an important notion for a leftist communicology. At the centre of Enzensberger's (1974:13) approach is the idea that "the mind industry has a dynamic of its own which it cannot arrest ... there are currents which run contrary to its present mission of stabilizing the status quo". The contradictions generated include: (1) the fact that the status quo media "depends on the very substance it must fear most ...: the creative productivity of people" (Enzensberger, 1974:5); (2) the tensions and conflicts within society will be 'imported' into the media themselves (no matter how hard the status quo attempts to exclude them). Hence conflicts will emerge in the media (Enzensberger, 1974:96) which radicals need to recognize as potential 'gaps' within MNC; (3)

'growth' (ie. a driving force in capitalism) demands that an element of 'choice' be granted and developed (Enzensberger, 1974: 12), hence again opening 'gaps'; and (4) the legitimation-industry of liberal-capitalism 'proclaims' democracy. Yet, as Habermas has also noted, this 'proclamation' in the absence of de facto 'implementation' poses a huge potential problem for the technocratic-management 'needs' of monopoly capital if the 'proclamation' were ever to be taken seriously (Enzensberger, 1974: 11). It is the task of Leftists to use all available 'gaps' to promote the idea that the 'promise' of democracy be realized.

iii the superstructures are themselves one of the sites of contradictions produced by MNC in the Information Age. This is a seminal insight (Enzensberger, 1974:14, 99). Enzensberger (1974:97) recognizes that electronic-information technology (eg. PCs, satellites, fibre-optic cabling, computer networking, etc) now make mass participatory democracy technically possible. It only requires the lifting of existing status quo 'restrictions' and the allocation of societal resources in this direction. A mass participatory democracy based on electronic information technology is equally possible in South Africa. Arguments that this country is a developing Third World society without the necessary resources to join the Information Age are patronizing and inept. Such arguments cloak a racism which relegates the Third (or South) World to automatic underdeveloped status (Tomaselli & Tomaselli, 1983). Developing South Africa in this direction merely requires the social decision to allocate the resources for the necessary training and technology.

This democratic 'possibility' is a potential 'Pandora's Box' of problems for MNC. None-the-less, it is driven by its own internal dynamic to develop this potentiality to make capitalist extraction more efficient. MNC superstructural-technocracy is hence developing its own potential 'grave-digger' in the form of technology that makes mass democratic mobilization possible. Enzensberger has, in effect, transferred Marx's notion of material contradiction to the superstructure. Those controlling monopoly capital can only stop the development of superstructural contradictions at the cost of deliberate economic regression (ie. an anathema to the laws of capital) (Enzensberger, 1974:98-100). For Enzensberger (1974:103), this is a contradiction capitalism cannot resolve.

Each of these assumptions has enormous implications for development theory. In the reconstruction and development of Southern Africa (in the wake of the apartheid-derived wars) consideration could profitably be given to finding ways of reading Enzensberger's ideas into local development projects. For example, in the 'Superstructural Age', development needs to direct significant attention to 'communication'. For the Left the challenge is to develop progressive communication relations.

Enzensberger's ideas pose a particular set of challenges for a leftist communicology:

* The need to re-think the role of the petit bourgeois intellectual (ie. those who 'staff' the superstructures), such that Leftists find ways to 'conceptualize' and 'develop' petit bourgeois information workers as 'contradictions' for MNC (Enzensberger, 1974:5, 14-15). This idea is an extension of Gramsci's work on intellectuals.

* The need to identify and utilize the technological POSSIBILITIES generated by capitalism to further leftist praxis. In this regard Enzensberger's ideas are Benjamin-derived (Enzensberger, 1974:116, 119). For Enzensberger, electronic information technology holds real possibilities for emancipation and democracy (Enzensberger, 1974:97, 124, 122). In other words, these media developments have "progressive potential" (Enzensberger, 1974: 102). This particular Enzensbergian notion becomes especially valuable when read together with Mattelart's ideas on popular communication.

  For Enzensberger, electronic information technology makes direct feedback, and hence dialogical-interaction, a real possibility. As he says: "the new media are egalitarian in structure" (Enzensberger, 1974:105). For Enzensberger, there is no longer any technological reason for blocking the development of an interactive media network. The technology developed by capitalism now makes possible an activated 'audience', in which the media become FACILITATORS of social dialogue, rather than mechanisms through which (one-directional) information is disseminated. Enzensberger (1974:97) is of the opinion that only class rule (ie. elitist vested interests) prevents the utilization of this 'potentiality' and the consequent 'democratization' of the media. In true Marxist fashion, Enzensberger sees capitalism as simultaneously having created the conditions for socialism and as responsible for blocking the potentialities it has created. One could extend this argument to include the way in which a Leninist vanguard nomenklatura (new elitist 'class'?) also blocked the development of a leftist-democracy in Eastern Europe.

* The need for collective organization to develop and use the

democratic potentialities of the new media (Enzensberger, 1974:109-110).

Ways of achieving a democratic socialist media strategy will be explored further in this chapter through the work of Mattelart and Habermas. A 'democratized' media, should provide: (1) the means to organize the democratic opposition to capitalist domination; and (2) the superstructural fulcrum for a democratic leftist ordering of society (Enzensberger, 1974: 113). This 'ideal' can serve as a useful theoretical 'introduction' to the work on democratic (socialist) media done by both Mattelart and Habermas. Enzensberger's media strategy entails:

(1) Making everyone a manipulator (Enzensberger, 1974:104-107), through utilizing the 'egalitarian potential' available in contemporary media technology (eg. the electronic media, word-processing, etc). This will make everyone a 'producer' of media messages. Further, following Habermas, Enzensberger proposed that West European and North American Leftists take liberal-capitalism at its word and rather than "demolish its promises ... take them literally" (Enzensberger, 1974:113). If Habermas is correct this would generate a 'legitimation crisis' for technocratic-MNC. At one stage this idea may have appeared less than applicable in South Africa (see Louw, 1982:127-8). But the 1990 reforms seem set to integrate South Africa into the Western (MNC-'liberal'?) mould (possibly even administered by a neo-leftist compradors). For this reason such a suggestion should not be too easily discounted in the post-1990 context.

(2) A rejection of the 'consumption model' of communication (Enzensberger, 1974:106) which has informed liberal-capitalist, rightist-authoritarian and Soviet vanguardist media. This uni-

directional (top-down) communication pattern holds true for the South African 'mainstream' media in both its commercial and state forms.

(3) An explicit attempt to utilize the media as a mass mobilizer for the 'production of an active participatory population. This is the basis for a democratic socialist ordering of society (Enzensberger, 1974:114). In South Africa it is the progressive-alternative media which in particular has (with varying degrees of success), moved some way towards attempting to build such 'mobilizing' media (see Chapter 6).

(4) An explicit attempt to reformulate a role for petit bourgeois information workers and intellectuals (eg. journalists). Enzensberger is opposed to the (vanguardist) notion of the 'expert' who 'teaches' the masses (ie. imposes ideas). For him, the radical journalist has to act as an "agent of the masses" (1974:128) in such a fashion that his/her objective is to develop the media's democratic potentialities. For most petit bourgeois intellectuals this implies a de facto 'de-expertizing' of themselves. So if one is a leftist journalist aiming to 'empower' the masses, it necessarily implies 'dis-empowering' oneself.

> Enzensberger wants to get away from the middle class perception (common amongst petit bourgeois journalists) that the middle classes 'know' what the subaltern groups 'want', and certainly know what is 'best for them' (ie. what they should want!). He goes so far as to suggest that many leftist intellectuals carry the same fear of the masses as do their conservative colleagues. This is the reason for their vanguardist approach (Enzensberger, 1974:102, 110-111). Enzensberger's demand is that subaltern groups should be empowered so that they can speak for themselves. This notion coincides Franz Fanon's (1968) conception of revolution as a mass participative action, rather than a petit bourgeois led insurrection. This notion also ties in well with Mattelart's work on 'popular' social organization, and complements the New Leftist notion of a popular hegemony where all groups and classes should be given a voice. Such a popular and empowering communication system fundamentally differs from the Leninist-vanguardist approach to

leftist praxis. Chapter 6 will further develop the notion of such a leftist-democratic communication system.

(5) A recognition of the need for collective organization as the basis for emancipation from domination. Enzensberger's real interest in the media springs from this concern. In other words, he recognizes the immense potential of the mass media (if used dialogically) to activate and empower the masses such that they can recognize their own potential for self-emancipation if they collectively organize themselves (Enzensberger, 1974:110). He also recognized the potential of the media for ending isolation (anomie) (Enzensberger, 1974:109). A leftist strategy using mass mobilization geared towards developing a mass participative media network offers much potential for the development of a real leftist democracy (see Chapter 6).

Enzensberger raises some interesting theoretical points for consideration by those seeking to develop a democratic South African praxis communication. However, it is really Mattelart who introduces some practical Third World input into this field.

## Towards democratic superstructural praxis: Mattelart's popular communication

Mattelart -- a Belgian academic who worked in Chile from 1962 to 1973 -- developed a particularly valuable New-Left oriented 'theoretical' formulation of the media as 'democracy-in-action'. It complements both the Gramscian and Williams/culturalist dimensions of CCS. The value of Mattelart lies in the grounding of his theory in (1) the concrete experience of attempts to construct democratic socialist hegemonies in Chile and Nicaragua; (2) the fact that both Chile and Nicaragua represented popular (multi-class) leftist struggles (similar to the South African MDM experience); (3) the similarities between the

Chilean and South African social formations; and (4) the fact that both the Chilean and Nicaraguan struggles suffered severe setbacks.

An understanding of Mattelart's view of the media requires knowledge about the nature of popular resistance. This Latin American phenomenon can be traced back to the Allende democratic socialist experiment in Chile from 1970 to 1973. An alliance of North American MNC and Chilean fascism defeated this experiment in popular-alliance government (Chanan, 1976). However, the lessons learned in Chile survived to influence other Leftists. This ultimately led to the revival of a successful left-popular Chilean alliance in 1989.

The popular lessons learned in Chile (1970-73) resurfaced in the Nicaraguan revolution (in 1979) where a Sandanista popular (multi-class) alliance emerged as a combination of revolutionary Marxist-Leninist theory, nationalism and anti-imperialism (Mattelart, 1986: 48). The Sandanista alliance was concerned with both socialism and democracy. This resulted in a policy favouring a mixed economy and political pluralism (Mattelart, 1986:9). This represented a significant, and pragmatic, departure from orthodox Marxism's stress on the exclusive working class nature of leftist revolution. In the Nicaraguan instance, constructing a leftist-hegemony was seen as requiring a pluralist (multi-class) effort (Mattelart, 1986:17). The parallel with ANC policy is clear. In Nicaragua, this 'project' initially attempted to: "articulate different political and social sectors around the construction of a civil society in a country where it has always been stifled, as coercion and exclusion prevailed over a consensus" (Mattelart, 1986:17).

During the early years of Sandanista rule Nicaragua represented a fascinating example of a Leftist attempt to construct a multi-class

leftist pluralist alliance. However, the experiment went sour. The rightist USA-backed Contras, together with direct USA military intervention (mining harbours, attacking airfields and oil depots, etc) placed an enormous strain on the Nicaraguan experiment. The Sandanistas were placed under siege (a small-scale version of what the USA did to the Soviet bloc). This siege effectively militarized the Sandanistas. (Militarization means top-down 'commanderist' communication patterns). In the process, the Sandanistas lost contact with their original bottom-up popular approach, and hence with the grassroots civil society. They lost touch to the extent that they were seemingly unaware of the level of war-wariness in their society. As a result, they lost an election they had clearly expected to win in 1990.

The parallels the Left has to deal with between the contexts of Nicaragua and South Africa are clear. If the Left wants to win elections they cannot rely on 'automatic' support from 'the People'[6]. Support has to be won and retained. The most effective way for achieving this is to build (and maintain) two-way communication channels. During 1990 the ANC was not even successful in achieving such communication within its own (Party) ranks, never mind on a wider social scale. The ANC, in fact, was characterized during 1990 by a top-down 'commanderist' style (WIP, No. 70/71, 1990).

The concept 'popular' is derived from "the idea of men and women united, linked by objective situations and the consciousness of living together, capable of developing solutions for their survival and liberation" (Mattelart, 1983:18). Further, popular implies 'opposition' to a specific type of 'situation', namely opposition to MNC exploitation (Mattelart, 1983:24). However, popular opposition to

exploitation is explicitly mobilized on a 'multi-class', 'non-factory' basis (Mattelart, 1983:65). (This does not mean that working class and factory-based mobilization does not take place as well). It is this form of mobilization which leads to the need to develop a form of (pluralist) alliance-building. This then raises (within such an alliance) issues of 'democracy' and 'freedom of expression' (see Mattelart, 1983: 55). This approach represents a Third-Worldization of Poulantzian-Eurocommunist ideas. One could also see the hand of Gramsci in early Sandanista ruled Nicaragua. The organization of the resistance resulting therefrom is, as a result, pushed in the direction of a 'grassroots' (bottom-up/ popular) mobilization based on the open articulation of differences in interests. By extension the organization of resistance is pushed away from the top-down (ie populist) approach of mobilization. (See Honawana's (1983:37) discussion of this in the Mocambiquan context.

A successful popular resistance should result in popular culture. This is culture created in the process of joint active resistance by ALL subaltern groups (ie. in terms of class, culture, ethnicity, sex, etc) (Mattelart, 1983: 33). During the first half of the 1980s, Nicaragua represented such an innovation in resistance. In other words:

> The Nicaraguan revolution is original in that it is a site where people of many nationalities converge, a site where people belonging to different currents of thought and ways of seeing the world have had little occasion in the past to come together and now find each other face to face with differences (Mattelart, 1986:26).

The resultant mode of resistance requires and develops methods of joint action in which subaltern 'partnership' replaces domination by any one interest group. In other words, "the necessity of constructing social alliances prevails over the 'dictatorship of the proletariat"

(Mattelart, 1986:17). As Mattelart (1983:31) notes: "a false conception would be to envisage it [popular struggle] as the working class' colonization of the other groups and classes". Mattelart (1983:34), in fact, notes that Leftists need to come to terms with the fact that the working class can often be profoundly 'unprogressive'. In the place of a single-minded 'workerism', a popular resistance rather mobilizes a new 'joint' culture of resistance: a culture produced in the course of the collective (multi-class, multi-group) struggle.

A similar approach developed in South Africa during the 1980s. A leftist (MDM) alliance developed, drawing support from many sectors: 'black' workers; professionals, students, and the petit bourgeoisie (drawn from the whole spectrum of 'ethnic' groups); African peasants; lumpen-proletariat; and even sections of the business class (see UDF, nd: 17-25; and Swilling, 1987).

Out of this dynamic comes a new energy that needs to be organized. In fact, popular energy is precisely the result of collective organization (Mattelart, 1983:30). This necessitates popular (democratic) structures of resistance (Mattelart, 1986:24), and increases the importance of the media. This is because the media are required " to help constitute a political subject which substitutes a collective subject ('people') for subject "public opinion." This non-mythical 'people' is composed of artisans and peasants, ... working class, liberal professions, and also businessmen" (Mattelart, 1986:17). Out of this diversity (and without suppressing differences) can be created a joint (national) popular culture. In this sense, Mattelart replicates Fanon's (1968:233) forward-looking concept of national

culture made in the process of struggle [7]. However, if such a (national) popular culture is to be actively produced it will require a creative Leftist use of the media to facilitate its generation. It further requires that the Left does not fall into the (leftist) trap of proclaiming a (mythological) 'People' (and then 'imposing' this myth onto everyone).

In deeply pluralistic and/or divided societies the development of a unified national culture will be a difficult task. South Africa is one such society. In such societies a unified popular culture is hence not the result of spontaneity. It is the result of concerted organization (Mattelart, 1986:24). This is not necessarily the antithesis of Williams' culturalist ideas, as it may at first appear. Rather it is a recognition that in some societies (eg. apartheid South Africa) cultural deformity is a fact. Some forms of popular culture may even be tied to separation, and hence a violation of a national unity. For example, a 'black township' culture (even a leftist resistance black township culture) must not be mistaken for a unified South African popular culture. Rather, it is the culture of only one section of 'the People'. A unified (ie. national) popular culture is likely to require the intervention of cultural workers in order to bring it to fruition. As Mattelart (1983:29) says: "Popular culture is indissociable from the collective forms of organization used by subaltern groups to translate their resistance into a strategy overthrowing the system and changing established structures."

This approach was developed during the early years of Sandanista-ruled Nicaragua. According to Mattelart 1986:17), "for the first time in the history of young revolutions, Gramsci's concept of hegemony had made its appearance, not only in discourse and programmes but also in

practice". Mattelart was only partially correct in this assessment because South Africans traversed similar organizational ground during the 1980s in the form of the MDM.

Such organized resistance has as its aim the mobilization of grassroots activity through the stimulation of "popular initiative and participation" (Mattelart, 1983: 25). It represents an explicit refusal of top-down manipulation -- ie. 'revolution by decree' (Mattelart, 1980: 84) -- in favour of bottom-up (ie democratic) control over the direction of change. In South African terms it was this bottom-up democratic approach that most clearly separated the MDM from both the NP's top-down approach to 'reform' in the 1980s, and to the top-down populism of organizations like Inkatha.

Popular organization is opposed to the 'passivity' implicit in the idea of being 'led' into a new mode of social organization (Mattelart, 1983: 27). Mattelart (1986:18) notes that the Nicaraguan popular revolution explicitly rejected the Leninist vanguardist model. (Although Mattelart has recognized (1986:12-15) that in certain 'hostile' historical material contexts a Leninist approach may be 'needed'). Certainly a popular approach sees democracy as of central importance in constructing a popular culture (Mattelart, 1986: 24). Democracy also necessitates an active grassroots organization, where all citizens need to speak for themselves. However, this often presents some problems. These include how to (1) generate such activity amongst subaltern groups socialized into passivity, and expecting to be 'led'; (2) generate a 'co-operative consciousness' (Mattelart, 1983: 26) as the basis for popular-alliance resistance; (3) prevent a consequent collapse of decision-making capacity (i.e. a

democratic anarchy); and (4) prevent the development of de facto vanguardist leadership -- as an outcome of frustration of the 'anarchy' (mentioned in point three, and/or due to the emergence of a group of leaders who know how to manipulate popular democratic sentiments).

Activating and maintaining grassroots democracy is a difficult task requiring new forms of organization and communication (Mattelart, 1983:30). Once the Sandanistas turned their primary attention to militarily defeating the USA-backed Contras, they paid too little attention to maintaining the communication channels with the Nicaraguan grassroots. The Sandanistas eventually violated their own popular approach. Instead of engaging in popular hegemonic labour to win and maintain support, they fell into the trap of assuming they had the (automatic) support of 'the People'. It is a trap the Left (including the South African Left) needs to pay serious attention to, because leftist rhetoric concerning the (mythological) 'People' easily leads to such complacency.

Given that this popular approach is difficult, and even 'controversial' within leftist circles (since it requires a significant revision of historical materialist principles), the question could be asked: why adopt this approach? The answer is that the nature of domination and suppression has not stood still. It is not only the proletariat which now faces exploitation and domination from MNC.

In the Information Age there are "new forms of social control, new sources of inequality, and new forms of confrontation based on the mastery of knowledge and know-how" (Mattelart, 1983:57). Many different sectors now all face same basic challenge from what Mattelart (1983:17) calls this new "creeping system of domination". This system is based upon a 're-making' of world capitalist relations of production

(Mattelart, 1983:62-3). Given the plurality of modes of domination within the MNC/Informations Age -- eg. in terms of class, race, nation, gender, religion, etc. -- it is hardly surprising that a plurality of (new) responses to domination are emerging (Mattelart, 1983: 17).

These changes pose a challenge to Leftists to adapt and to seek new contradictions and new allies, and in particular to recognize the potential importance of communication and the 'culture industry' within the leftist struggle (Mattelart, 1980: xviii). What is now required is to weld these new multi-faceted (multi-class) responses into a popular alliance. Amongst the sectors whose interests may now co-incide with the workers' opposition to MNC are: peasants, the lumpen-proletariat, and information workers (academics, teachers, journalists, and computer programmers). Mattelart 1983:62) argues that many workers organizations in the capitalist metropoles have failed to match up to the challenge of welding all these sectors into an alliance (Mattelart, 1983: 62). He might have added that the Marxists of Eastern Europe fared even worse in adjusting to this challenge. Their failure led to the anti-Marxist revolutions of 1989/90. Further, there is a need to recognize that Leftists cannot expect a 'necessary' uniform progress; ie. 'the dialectic' is not necessarily 'progressive'. Rather, 'the struggle' will be characterized by advances and withdrawals (Mattelart, 1983:18). It is up to Leftists to work at maximizing the periods of advance and minimizing the periods of withdrawal, and not to await some hidden hand ('the dialectic') to 'deliver' progress towards leftist hegemony.

For Mattelart (1983:17) the 're-making' of capitalism demands that all those "who struggle against the power apparatus, who refuse the

exploitation of 'human beings by human beings', certain classes by other classes, certain races by other races, certain nations by other nations, certain peoples by other peoples", now need to 're-make' their struggle in the form of a popular (pluralistic) opposition. Building pluralistic leftist hegemonies is required. This approach will be learned by 'doing' it in each specific historical material context (ie. no two 'alliances' are going to be the same). However, Mattelart does offer some basic guidelines for such popular hegemonic work:

(1) His approach amounts to a New Leftist rejection of the old reified and ossified Marxist 'models' (Mattelart, 1983:60). It represents a break with a reified Leninist model of a 'centralized' (Mattelart, 1983:38) and 'decreed' revolution (Mattelart, 1980:84).

(2) New forms of domination (derived from the 're-ordering' of world capital into the MNC/Information Age) have opened up new 'possibilities' for radical opposition (Mattelart, 1983:58). However, this requires an 'openness' to new forms of resistance, and to the mobilization of pluralist alliances (Mattelart, 1986:14) and popular communication (Mattelart, 1980:46). One of the key new features of contemporary domination identified by Mattelart is the fact that "capitalism today finds it impossible to allow the existence of a critical petit bourgeoisie" (Mattelart, 1983: 66). This need to 'tighten up 'is related to the crisis world capitalism has faced since the 1970s (Innes, 1984:190) [8]. This crisis has also produced the 'New Right' (Thatcher-Reagan-Kohl). If one adds to this 'tightening up' the increasing 'proleterianization' of intellectual functions (ie. income levels of academics and journalists are dropping relative to other economic sectors, and a de-skilling/'clerkifying' of journalism is apparent), then one can expect to find a widening gap between

intellectual (information worker) interests and the interests of the capitalist bourgeoisie. Intellectuals thus increasingly become likely partners in a leftist popular alliance. However, coping with such developments requires a 'reconstruction' of historical materialism in order that it can 'deal' with these phenomena (Mattelart, 1983: 48). In this respect there is a clear overlap between the ideas of Mattelart, Enzensberger and Habermas.

(3) A popular alliance capitalizes upon the fact that in certain contexts -- eg. Nicaragua in the late 1970s (Mattelart, 1986: 11), and South Africa in the late 1980s -- the Right appears to be unable to solve the social crisis. Some solution is demanded. However, Mattelart's contention (albeit implicit) is that, in certain social formations (possibly: Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Chile, etc?), neither can the working class solve the crisis on its own. In such contexts, a solution to the crises faced would seem to require a leftist popular alliance -- ie. a pluralist hegemony -- (Mattelart, 1983:66-7). Such an alliance-based resistance strategy will require compromises and hence result in a mixed economy and pluralism (Mattelart, 1986:9, 17). Clearly such a strategy is closer to the Poulantzian (and Gramsician) idea rather than Leninism.

(4) A need for theoretical reflection on past errors. Amongst such errors, for Mattelart, has been the 'reading as catechism' of certain 'models' developed in other contexts. (This is especially true of the Leninist model, which has all too frequently been uncritically applied to contexts bearing none of the problems Lenin had to contend with). Further, Mattelart recognizes the need to learn from errors made during previous attempts to implement the popular approach. There is a clear

need to learn from the defeat of the Chilean popular experiment in 1973 (Mattelart, 1983:67) and the electoral defeat of the Sandanistas in 1990.

Mattelart's work on developing the concept of a 'popular' hegemony has enormous implications for any praxis-communication built thereupon. His popular communication strategy represents in effect a New Leftist democratic (dialogical) alternative to the Leninist rhetorical option.

Mattelart represents something of a 'Third Worldized' and more practically-grounded version of Habermas's (1974) 'public sphere' theory of a democratic (or dialogical) superstructural praxis (ie. where the superstructures become sites of struggle). A Mattelart-type popular (democratic) communicative-praxis proposes the following media strategy:

i. An explicit attempt to get away from a media/communication model based upon the idea of passive recipients -- ie. 'consumption' communication (Mattelart, 1983:17). Its passivity makes possible the perpetuation of undemocratic and exploitative social conditions. An 'activated' population constitutes a profound challenge for contemporary forms of domination. (This point will be developed later when Habermas' notion of 'legitimation crisis' is dealt with).

ii. An attempt to develop media operating as 'dialogue' or two-way communication. This "gives priority to the receivers participation" (Mattelart, 1986:24) in a total process of interaction which refuses to 'privilege' journalists/media workers. In such a 'model' journalists are moved from being sources of information to facilitators of communication (Mattelart, 1983:360). This means re-thinking the notion of

'audience' such that the popular masses become co-producers of messages (Mattelart, 1983:360-1, 363); and re-thinking the notion of 'journalist' (and 'information worker') (Mattelart, 1983:361-2). Both Mattelart and Enzensberger develop their notion of praxis on the assumption that such a dialogical communication system would constitute a profound threat to contemporary forms of social domination.

iii An important aim is to teach subaltern groups to become active (Mattelart, 1980:68) (and organized), self-confident (ie. there is a need to develop self-esteem), and to de-mystify themselves and their conditions (Mattelart, 1983: 360, 363-4). Here we can see a clear overlap with the ideas of Franz Fanon (1968);

iv. Yet Mattelart envisages this 'conscientization' of the subaltern groups in a different way to Lenin's vanguardist approach. For Mattelart the conscientization process needs to be a two-way (Mattelart, 1980:79) teaching and learning experience in which the subaltern groups (workers, peasants, lumpenproletariat, ethnically-suppressed groups, gays, etc) and petit bourgeois intellectuals 'discover' each other, and learn from each other (Mattelart, 1983:361, 363-4). The CCSU has attempted to implement such 'learning experiences' in the South African context (Tomaselli, et al, 1988a). The resulting synthesis should result in the desired popular-leftist culture (a culture that is based on a democratically activated population). It is an understanding of conscientization and culture based upon a popular-alliance conception of struggle (Mattelart, 1983: 63-65), in which conscientization (or education) takes place through participation

in a popular struggle (Mattelart, 1980:139).

iv. Develop an autonomous leftist media network (ie. parallel to the rightist media) which serves to mobilize popular counter-hegemonic groups and which can act as 'experiments' or 'trial runs' in democratic-leftist organization. This requires the development of new forms of "collective organization" (Mattelart, 1983:30), in order to 'release' the energy of existing resistance (often found in the 'cracks' and 'gaps' of the the MNC order). This will generate popular culture.

v. Further, the rightist media themselves need to be understood as potential sites of contradiction, confrontation and the mediation of class conflict in capitalist society (Mattelart, 1983:49, 51, 53). This notion, of course, overlaps with Enzensberger's (1974) view of 'contradiction', and with this thesis' proposal that historical materialism be reconstructed such that all contradictions, including superstructural contradictions be 'used' by radicals. Once class conflict is sought within the rightist media themselves a new challenge is opened up for a left-popular alliance -- the need to develop a (popular) trade union for media workers in order to develop and channel such contradictions (Mattelart, 1983:28).

An important point to note about this communicative praxis is that it developed within the extremely repressive conditions of the Nicaraguan dictatorship. By 1977, the Somoza regime had a blanket of censorship in operation, effectively closing all legal forms of communication for those opposed to Somoza. The result of this was the emergence of a counter-hegemonic communication network in the form of the 'Journalism of the Catacombs" (Mattelart, 1986: 32); the 'Pintas'

(or wall graffiti) (Mattelart, 1986:34); leaflets, flyers and the seizure of radio stations (Mattelart, 1986:34); and of 'cultural resistance' (Mattelart, 1986:35).

The term 'journalism of the catacombs was "derived from two circumstances: firstly, from the fact that journalism began to be almost clandestinely practiced and, secondly, that the journalists found refuge in Catholic churches, where they could bring people together to inform them ... participating in this experience were journalism students, editors, photographers, and heads of the different media" (Mattelart, 1986:32). As important, this mode of communication took the form of a dialogue which was "a lively, flexible and dynamic journalism. It managed to create a 'circuit' of language; transmitter and receiver intimately united, interchangeable". It also rejected the notion of 'objectivity' (Mattelart, 1986: 32). In some respects the Nicaraguan experience parallels the development in Zimbabwe -- between 1976 and 1980 -- of 'pungwes', or mass conscientization meetings at night (Frederikse, 1982:60, 314). During the States of Emergency in South Africa (1986-1989), people were forced into a similar mode of communication, of which the toyi-toyi and liberation songs were the most apparent (Strelitz, 1990). The South African popular struggle of that period, in fact, bore many similarities to the Nicaraguan experience, of which resistance-communication was but one mode of expression.

Perhaps more significant is that much of Mattelart's work is based on societies already controlled by popular-socialist governments (ie. Chile and Nicaragua). Mattelart refocussed leftist communicology away from only the Machiavellian needs of a popular-socialist counter

hegemony, into a concern with a ruling hegemony wanting to create democratic media (ie. a 'public sphere'). This would complement a leftist-democratic society. Mattelart's work focuses attention upon the need to draw a clear distinction between the needs of 'counter' and 'ruling' leftist hegemonies. It is a distinction the Soviets, for example, failed to draw -- a failure which produced an undemocratic media system (when measured in terms of Mattelart's (or Habermas') criteria. As an outcome of Mattelart's distinction he produced particularly valuable work on the nature of '<u>journalist practices</u>':

i. A rejection of the genre of journalism developed within capitalist relations of production (Mattelart, 1980:60-3; and Mattelart, 1980:xix), with its notions of 'markets', 'audience-targeting', and a 'passive audience'. Mattelart (1983:362) 're-thinks' the mode of media production such that the 'audience' is empowered by being explicitly organized so that it can speak for itself. For Mattelart such an activated 'audience' within a dialogical communicative network provides the best basis for a post-revolutionary leftist-democratic society where the population become active participants in the democracy being built. This idea is, of course, derivative of the idea of activating the masses during the counter-hegemonic phase. This is done through a media which views the masses as also being producers of messages, and which reconceptualizes journalists as facilitators rather than sources of information. It is a rejection (i) of uni-directional communication (Mattelart, 1980: 52; 1983: 362); (ii) of populist (top-down) journalism (Mattelart, 1980: 55); and (iii) an explicit attempt to 'democratize reception' (Mattelart, 1980: 109).

Mattelart's point is that this mass activity and participatory approach to communication needs to be maintained and expanded once the counter-hegemony phase is over. Further, it is important to note that he re-thinks the process of media production such that all sectors of the popular masses are organized to give voice to their own interests. This implicitly introduces into leftist praxis the recognition of having to deal with different class interests within the popular alliance (Mattelart, 1983: 363), or 'broad front' (Mattelart, 1980: 65). This can easily lead to a left-pluralist conception of the media in terms of which each interest group should be enabled to articulate (perhaps via its own media) its own interests (see Louw, 1990). Belgium has such a pluralist media (Mattelart & Piemme, 1983:413), as do Holland and Sweden.

ii. A 'nationalization' of media (even by a popular government) is not seen as sufficient in itself, because this will not necessarily change the character of the media into a popular (dialogical) communication structure (Mattelart, 1983:19). A local example of the failure of the 'nationalization' option would be Zimbabwe where the Rhodesian media were nationalized and white staffers were replaced by blacks, but the Rhodesian media practices were <u>not</u> changed. As Mattelart (1980:xxiv) notes: "the mass media cannot be changed by a mere inversion of the signs of the messages which they transmit". This is because media technology and media 'practices' are not necessarily neutral, but rather, actually 'impose' certain slants onto the meanings emanating therefrom. Hence, "the bourgeoisie and imperialism have imposed on us forms of communication which correspond to a particular mode of

producing life" (Mattelart, 1980:xxv). At the heart of Mattelart's critique is that the media technology and practices developed by capitalism make no attempt to foster participative democracy (dialogue) and active consciousness (Mattelart, 1980:136). If one uncritically takes over capitalist media structures and practices (ie. "form") the result will be to de facto re-produce an undemocratic and anti-popular slant to media products (ie. "content"). Such a media will retard the development of a popular democratic society. Mattelart's basic argument is based on the idea that the bourgeois genre of journalism has a "form and content" appropriate for the reproduction of undemocratic and exploitative relations of production. To take over (ie. nationalize) the "form" will automatically 'import' with it a "content" inappropriate for a popular-leftist ordering of society (Mattelart, 1980:98-104).

iii. Mattelart argues that, rather than 'nationalizing' existing "forms", new 'practices', new ways of using media technology, and in some cases new media technology itself are needed (Mattelart, 1980:104-6). A popular democracy (wherein relations of production are genuinely transformed) demands an autonomous popular and democratically-structured media (Mattelart, 1980: 101). In South African terms this leads to the conclusion that the existing' mainstream' media should not be nationalized by any incoming leftist government (see Louw, 1990).

iv. A need to consider ways of winning over new allies to the popular alliance (Mattelart in Mattelart & Siegelaub, 1983:357). This, in part requires taking seriously what people "like" (Mattelart, 1986:23). This, of course, is an implicit rejection of the

Leninist notion that the vanguard 'knows' what people 'should like'. Mattelart, for example, notes that in popular Nicaragua 'soap operas' (despite being expressions of USA 'cultural imperialism') were retained (Mattelart, 1986:21).

. The avoidance of sloganeering. Rather, the supporters of the popular alliance need to be taken more seriously and not insulted by merely being fed slogans (Mattelart & Siegelaub, 1983:359). Slogans represent a de facto top-down rhetorical (manipulative) form of communication. Sections of the South African Left have, on occasion, slipped into such sloganeering such that the chanting of 'viva! viva!' becomes the predominant tool of Left-organizational practice.

The value of Mattelart's work on popular communication lies in his theoretical 'systematization' of a phenomenon that manifested itself in Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s. His work could transfer practical and theoretical lessons learned in Chile and Nicaragua to South African information workers in the contemporary context. If South African media activists were able to implement Mattelart's proposed popular communication, the chances of building a democratic leftist post-apartheid South Africa would be greatly enhanced.

White's proposals for democratizing communication

Robert White's concern with the 'democratization of communication' grew out of his work in Latin America where he was involved with the Catholic Church's work facilitating the growth of a radio network serving lower-status sectors of the population. Given the similarity in their contextual backgrounds it is not surprising to find great similarities between White and Mattelart on popular communication, with

White consolidating many of the themes found in Mattelart. White, however, has a stronger orientation towards the rural-peasant sector than does Mattelart's. More importantly, White ultimately goes further and draws the wider 'democratic' implications out of the Latin American communication experience.

As with Mattelart, White stresses the importance of popular participation in communication processes: to be democratic, communication must facilitate people speaking for themselves. Hence, a central component of White's definition of popular communication is: "the beginning of comunicacion popular is the decision [by lower-status groups] not to rely on traditional authority figures or others with powerful resources to speak for them" (White, 1980:4). In other words, popular communication represents the establishment of "channels independent of a hierarchy of intermediaries" (White, 1980:3). Instead, the lower status groups develop their own "independent leadership" and invent their own "self-reliant and defiant language" (White, 1980:4). In Gramscian terms, these groups develop their own organic intellectuals.

For White, "Comunicacion popular arises within a lower-status movement for social change, often in opposition to the stable structure of small communities and to the established local media" (White, 1980:4). Through learning to speak to themselves about matters affecting their lives, they come to recognize their condition and that they can do something to improve their position. "Comunicacion popular generates a new vision of the social world and a new understanding of the real causes of lower status dependency and exploitation. It also generates a new view of history and new forms of artistic expression in

music and folk drama" (White, 1980:8). This is an extension, into media terms, of Paulo Freire's notion of 'conscientization' (White, 1980:5).

An important distinction drawn by White is the difference between two forms of popular communication, namely: group communication versus people's communication. This distinction, not raised by Mattelart, is a valuable analytical tool when appraising popular communication projects. Group communication is more 'top-down': "sympathetic allies [of the lower status groups] with more educational, technical and managerial backgrounds" (White, 1980:8) set up communication centres with a view to encouraging the conscientization process. The people's communication approach is more bottom-up: "the poor are themselves setting up their own community organizations in response to pressing social issues. These organizations then seek out technical help from the resource centres" (White, 1989:17). Applying this to South Africa, the left-wing press of the 1980s was generally of the 'group communication' genre, although many of those working on this press often (incorrectly, in terms of White's definition) referred to themselves as the 'people's press' (see Chapter 5).

White, however, went beyond examining popular communication and extended the lessons learned in Latin America into a formulation of what 'democratic communication' should be at a wider level (White, 1982, 1984). White provides a number of criteria required for the democratization of communication:

1. Equality of access to information should be a basic right (White, 1982:3) in order to overcome a social skewing into information-rich and information-poor sections of the population.
2. All citizens should be in a position to participate in the input of

material into the communication infrastructures of society -- ie. communication-input should not be restricted to media professionals alone (White, 1982:4). Further, such input should represent a pluralistic body of social actors (White 1984:22). This conception of media would be premised upon a philosophy of participatory communication (White 1984:22). In this way it represents an extension of the popular communication genre into a wider social communication principle.

3. Audiences should have an automatic right of reply in the form of the opportunity to collectively criticize, analyze and participate in the communication process as different groups who want to organize themselves (White, 1982:4).
4. Mechanisms whereby all sectors of the population have access to media policy decision-making should be available(White, 1982:4). This requires an administrative structure that preserves direct popular control (White, 1984:22), for example, in the form of permanent co-ordinating councils (White, 1982:4).
5. Communication infrastructures in society must be made accountable to the citizens of that society (White, 1982:5). White (1982:5) proposes a number of measures to achieve this:
   (a) Representative decision-making structures (see above point 4);
   (b) Representative property structures;
   (c) The development of new concepts in Public Law governing information and communication which protect every citizen's right to access. In other words, legal status needs to be given to participatory communication (White, 1984:22).
   (d) The development of forms of public financing that overcome the

skewing resulting from media monopoly interests.

6. The recognition that libertarian media principles are inadequate in the contemporary context (White, 1982:5) because they only grant a 'paper right' to access (Louw, 1990).
7. In order to equip citizens for participation, media education (White, 1982:5) and media training (White, 1984:22) programmes are needed.
8. A stable means of financing of participative communication infrastructures that avoids dependence on commercial income is required (White, 1984:22).
9. Any proposal for the democratization of communication in a society has to work from the actual conditions in that society -- ie. media democratization must be organically linked to wider social, economic and political processes (White, 1982:2). White (1982:2) notes that if this is not done, democratizing communication is unlikely to be successful. Hence a democratization process requires initially dealing with the problems certain social contexts might present for the emergence of democratic communication (White, 1984:10).

White's work offers some valuable clues as to how experiences gained during 'popular communication' struggles can be extended to develop a wider notion of the 'democratization' of social communication. Given that the popular struggle phase appears to be at an end in South Africa, White's ideas could be used as one point of departure in any move towards building a democratized post-apartheid media infrastructure.

Habermas' 'Public Sphere' as the site for leftist praxis

Jurgen Habermas' notion of the "public sphere", like Mattelart's

notion of "popular communication", is concerned with active two-way (dialogical) communication. Both Habermas and Mattelart recognize that 'communication' holds the key for constructing mass participative democracy. This requires a critique of: (1) one directional (communicator-to-receiver) communication; (2) rhetorical (ie. manipulative, one-directional) communication, which inherently under-values the worth of the recipients; and (3) the way in which mass communication has been constructed (within both MNC and 'state socialism'). It does not facilitate mass participation, but rather facilitates the control and manipulation of the masses. It also requires conceptualizing ways of 're-working' existing communication infrastructures. This is necessary in order to 'liberate' the potential for mass participative democracy currently locked up within the existing information technology.

If Habermas' totality (subject-object) ideas (see Chapter 2) are used to develop a leftist theory of change, the results are a conception of praxis different to those of Marx. For Habermas, Leftists concerned with praxis have to look not only at the material mode of production as a site of struggle, but also at other sites located in the superstructures, or what Habermas calls "structures of linguistically produced intersubjectivity" (1976:10). As he says: "a social-scientifically appropriate crisis concept must grasp the connection between system integration and social integration" (Habermas, 1976:4). "System integration" is equivalent to the material relations of production, while "social integration" represents the superstructures . Habermas differentiates between three levels of social integration:

(a) general structures of action, (b) structures of world views,

> in so far as they are determinate for morality and law, and (c) structures of institutionalized law and of binding moral representations" (Habermas, 1979: 157).

Social change comes about through developments in these structures such that the structures become progressively more developed (Habermas, 1979:140). In this Habermas works explicitly within the structural-rationalist (and realist) paradigm.

These superstructural structures now serve to stabilize (integrate) society through "staged and manipulative publicity" (Habermas, 1989: 232). The public is, in effect superstructurally managed within a modern Information Age society. These ideas are an extension of the Frankfurt School's work on the 'culture industry'. This superstructural management takes place in the 'public sphere'. This has gradually developed into a manipulative tool of technocratic rationality within MNC relations of production. Because MNC constitutes a world-wide network (now even extending to the former Second World), Habermas' ideas have a currency beyond the First World. Certainly 'public sphere' manipulation is more profound in the USA or Europe. However, its range reaches deeply into MNC dependences as well. In South Africa one should not underestimate the penetration of Information Age technology -- ie. even the most 'marginal' social groups (rural peasants and the lumpenproletariat) are now part of a world penetrated by radio, cassette tape recorders, and hence American 'pop culture'. What is more, the re-distribution of wealth that will take place in a post-apartheid South Africa will presumably increase the diffusion of information technology throughout society. This will only serve to increase the integration of ever greater numbers of South Africans more firmly into the (now 'Americanized' world-wide) Information Age 'public sphere'. This will happen unless the South

African Left can develop a 'Media Policy' able to successfully counter this (world-wide) trend without impeding South Africa's economic growth.

Habermas notes that the public sphere was not always a realm of uni-directional manipulation. At one stage the 'public sphere' was the site of a real democratic interaction. This occurred at the height of the liberal free enterprise era in Europe and the USA (Habermas, 1989: 73-9). However, the later development of capitalism destroyed this democratic public sphere:

> In the hundred years following the heyday of liberalism, during which capitalism gradually became "organized", the original relationship of public and private sphere in fact dissolved; the contours of the bourgeois public sphere eroded. .... While it penetrated more spheres of society, it simultaneously lost its political function, namely: that of subjecting the affairs that it made public to the control of a critical public" (Habermas, 1989: 140).

The logic of capital destroyed 'free enterprise' and concentrated capital in fewer and fewer hands -- ie. MNCs -- a trend Marx had predicted (Marx, 1974:690-1). With the concentration of capital into huge capitalist bureaucracies (i.e mncs), came the ideology to underpin such capitalism -- the ideology of technocratic efficiency and 'scientifically' managed advancement [9]. This ideology was diffused (uni-directionally) through the machinery of the culture industry. The needs of a technocratic (capitalist) rationalization are necessarily authoritarian (Habermas, 1976:123). Technocracy requires efficient 'labour units', not critical human beings. Hence, Habermas (1979:196) notes that there exists a line of cleavage between "technocracy" and democratic "participative models" of social organization. The reason that the destruction of 'free enterprise' coincided with the destruction of the 'public sphere' [10] is because for technocracy to

run efficiently people must be made to fulfill 'system needs', preferably as uncritical 'cheerful robots'. In this respect Habermas is merely following the pessimistic line of thought originally developed by Horkheimer and Adorno (1979).

However, this line of reasoning results in an intriguing non-pessimistic twist -- ie. a new understanding of leftist praxis. This understanding of Leftist struggle slides easily into either a CCS and/or Mattelart conception of using the superstructures for leftist praxis. Habermas' notion of praxis is tied up with his work on the potential 'legitimation crisis' he identifies within (capitalist) technocratic society (Habermas, 1976). Habermas's work on legitimation crises bears some remarkable similarities with Enzensberger's work on superstructural praxis. Both recognize that capitalism has mutated into a superstructural mode of production in the Information Age. Because of this mutation Leftists need to become aware of potential contradictions and crises within the superstructures instead of only confining themselves to the material base.

Habermas builds on the insight we find in the Frankfurt School and Gramsci that capitalism uses superstructures (as 'trenches') to deflect and co-opt revolutionary forces. (Up to 1989 it was, in part, possible to argue that such superstructural deflection was not a factor in South Africa. However, the effects of the 1990 reforms will increasingly put paid to such a view. The reforming-Right and their MNC-allies will now be in a position to use superstructural trenches to deflect and co-opt in their efforts to retain the (reformed) status quo).

In the very act of using the superstructures to 'paper over' the contradictions of capitalism, MNC may well be creating another set of

contradictions. Habermas identifies four possible sites of contradictions in advanced capitalism (1976:49-50), namely: (1) economic; (2) political-administrative ("rationality crisis"); (3) political-legitimation; and (4) socio-cultural 'action-motivation'. It is noteworthy that three of these are contradictions in the superstructures. As he says:

> I do not exclude the possibility that economic crises can be permanently averted, although only in such a way that contradictory steering imperatives that assert themselves in the pressure for capital realization would produce a series of other crisis tendencies. ....I am of the opinion that the contradiction of socialized production for particular ends thereby takes on again a political form (Habermas, 1976, 40).

For Habermas, a central feature of modern capitalism is its need for fine-tuned efficiency. Advanced capitalism is a highly planned system -- the planning taking place within the huge MNC bureaucracies. Such efficient planning is incompatible with human beings as critical 'free agents'. For the system to work behaviour has to be 'controlled' and/or manipulated so that people behave as effective workers and consumers (se Habermas, 1980: Chapter 5). But this creates an enormous potential problem for MNC because liberal-capitalist societies are premised upon the very notion of democracy, free choice and free enterprise -- ie. the notion of a 'public sphere' in the sense of the liberal ideal model. It is this very 'ideal model' which the reforming-Right wishes to implement in South Africa. (See statement on NP's policy made by the Deputy Minister of Constitutional Affairs, Roelf Meyer at Idasa's "Issues in Transition" debate -- Democracy in Action, February/March 1991, p.10).

So a line of contradiction has been built into MNC -- ie. a contradiction between the 'theoretical ideal' and de facto system functioning. In order to function, capitalism has to plan, manipulate

and macro-manage the system (eg. the role of Central Banks). But because of the ideology of 'free enterprise', and 'liberal-democracy' it cannot be seen to be doing this (Habermas, 1976:66). 'Democracy' is supposed to be more important than 'efficiency' within liberal-capitalism. Habermas says in reality it is the other way around. It is one of the tasks of the culture industry to simultaneously propagate the ideology and disguise the fact that the ideal of 'freedom' is not being fulfilled in reality.

The gap between 'ideal' and 'reality' creates a potential site of contradictions for Leftists to exploit. Exploiting the gap requires Leftists to get to grips with the operation of the superstructures and liberal-capitalist ideology in order to use these to reactivate the critical spirit associated with the original 'public sphere'. The idea would be to 'superstructurally activate' people -- ie. get people (who have been taught -- in schools for example -- that they are 'free' and 'equal' (Habermas, 1979:185) to critically question the de facto situation; to compare the 'ideal' promised to them with the reality. The 'ideal-reality' contradiction is especially acute precisely because capitalism remains an inequitable class-based exploitative system (Habermas, 1976:73). As Habermas says, "the 'fundamental contradiction' can break out in a questioning, rich in practical consequences" (1976:69). This is a contradiction not limited to the First World -- ie. it is as potentially valuable to Leftists challenging Africa's comprador-rulers.

Such Habermasian leftist work is, of course, inherently superstructural. Gramsci's 'superstructural trenches' would be attacked superstructurally. This approach to praxis is thus

fundamentally different to the original Marxist conception (see Habermas, 1989:234). Because capitalism has changed and Leftists now have to confront a 'new' sort of social system. The original formulation of historical materialism will no longer do. The changes mean seeking out a new set of contradictions (Habermas, 1979:160-167). It means reconstructing historical materialism in a superstructural direction. Yet Habermas' reconstruction remains based on the original Marxist insight -- if people realize they are exploited they will become angry. So the key to Habermas' notion of praxis is to get citizens of the liberal-democracies (or, in fact ANY society claiming to be 'democratic') to take their societies ISAs at their word'. If they are promised democratic rights they must insist on using them to the full -- by demanding the right of "participation" (Habermas, 1976: 138).

The building of a full participatory mass democracy can "no longer be disqualified as simply utopian" (Habermas, 1989:235). In this respect we can see an overlap between Habermas' and Enzensberger's ideas. The information technology of the contemporary era DOES provide the basis for a mass participatory 'public sphere'. This idea also forms the central premise of this thesis. The notion that such information technology (and information based societies) is a 'First World' luxury needs to be contested. Such a view is racist (ie. 'natives' are not able to run sophisticated societies and technology) and would complement the needs of MNC to prevent the development of full democracies in the 'South' (where they will presumably relocate their 'dirty' and 'problematic' heavy industry). Furthermore, Leftists must persuade people to expect the functioning of a mass participatory democracy (based on the available information-technology) as a basic

right. Habermas (1976:74) says such expectations could not be fulfilled without causing a collapse of exploitative social arrangements (based on manipulation); or as he says:

> The definitive limits to procuring legitimation are inflexible normative structures that no longer provide the economic-political system with ideological resources, but instead confront it with exorbitant demands (Habermas, 1976:93).

The point is, according to Habermas, advanced capitalism destroys real democracy (1976:123). The technocratic demands for fine-tuned efficiency could not tolerate the existence of a real functioning 'public sphere'. In other words, a participative social dialogue, in which all citizens really exercised their 'democratic right' would interfere with the needs of administrative (technocratic) rationality. Yet the legitimacy of advanced capitalism depends upon the myth of having free choice and democratic rights. Habermas says Leftists must get people to insist on exercising the rights that they told they have. They should be encouraged to demand to exercise their democratic rights and their access to a 'public sphere' that is supposed to exist. In this way, 'democracy' becomes the new contradiction for MNC. It is a 'totality' contradiction -- ie. if superstructural 'rights' were really exercised it would 'disrupt the material base, causing system crisis. This call to activate the public sphere is more-or-less equivalent to Mattelart's call to Leftists to build a participatory democracy based upon a popular communication.

The Left needs to re-direct attention towards the superstructures as a possible site of struggle. And "democracy" (a superstructural contradiction) rather than "economic exploitation" (a material contradiction) is the mobilizing tool. Specifically, the Left should be working to develop fully functioning 'public spheres' using the

information technology available. The unequal and exploitative social relationships of MNC would be hard pressed to survive such functioning public spheres.

For the South African Left the ideas discussed in this section (especially when read with Mattelart) are of potential value in two ways. Firstly, in the event of the South African struggle being co-opted and/or deflected by the reformed-Right and their MNC-allies, the leftist struggle will need to continue. In this case Habermas' ideas become of immediate relevance. Secondly, the South African left might succeed in manoeuvring themselves into the position where they are called upon to build a leftist hegemony. In that case Habermas and Mattelart provide valuable insights on how to construct a leftist **participatory democracy** based upon the full utilization of contemporary media/information-technology. (In that way the errors of Eastern Europe can be avoided).

FOOTNOTES

[1] This list, of necessity, represents only a limited view of key contributions to South African leftist political theory. Including a comprehensive list would be very difficult given the extensive leftist theoretical work done by South Africans. Hence this list excludes the work of important theorists like: Callinicos; Kaplan; Bunting; Slovo; Sitas; Webster; Foster; Hemson; and O'Meara (and others of the 'Sussex School').

[2] The importance of leftist 'subjective' work in the South African context is perhaps reinforced by a general recognition by probably the majority of South African leftists that, 'socialism' is not really on the agenda in the foreseeable future. It is a recognition that has deep roots, and was felt even at the height of the 1980s popular uprising. (The collapse of Eastern Europe has only served to reinforce this perception). This recognition is widely reflected within the 'popular' ANC-SACP (and UDF) where the influence of the SACP's 'two stagism' is widely felt. Perhaps, more significantly, COSATU too has recognized this (see Sitas, 1988:13). Such leftist pragmatism has been rejected by socialists in NEUM/WOSA, AZAPO and by the Marxist Workers Tendency.

[3] The hostility of the rightist 'guild press' to the Left does, of

course, also play a significant part in the 'bad press' the Left receives in South Africa. However, this has served to become an excuse in leftist circles for not making any attempt to develop techniques to exploit whatever 'gaps' might exist in the 'mainstream media'. In addition, the South African Left generally have few activists able to deal with the media in a 'professional' manner. This has only served to further alienate 'guild press' journalists from the Left, and so has compounded the problem of a bad press.

[4] In this respect 'superstructure(s)' can be seen as having two possible meanings: either as a 'metaphor'; and/or as a series of 'concrete' apparatuses, in the Althusserian sense.

[5] Both Volosinov (1973:23) and Tomaselli (1986b:13) have drawn attention to the latter form of micro-superstructural struggle which they called a 'struggle for the sign'. The suggestion to engage in a 'struggle for the sign' would direct Leftists into a concern with the smallest unit of meaning -- the sign. Such a struggle would require the development of a leftist semiotics ('science of signs'). Such a semiotics offers an analytical tool for the decoding of rightist rhetoric and ideology. In addition, such a semiotics should improve the capacity for the construction of a maximally-impactful leftist rhetoric within a wider superstructural battle.

[6] SWAPO made the error of 'assuming' support of 'the People'. As a consequence, SWAPO's election campaign was poorly thought out. No attempt was made to identify and target 'the not-yet converted'. On the other hand the Rightist DTA put together a very sophisticated electoral campaign precisely aimed at expanding its support base. The result was that the Rightist parties won over 40% of the vote. During 1990 evidence suggested that the ANC was making the same mistake of assuming the support of 'the People' instead of working to ensure that support.

[7] Regarding the construction of a 'National Culture', it should be noted that two diametrically opposite interpretations of what this means have influenced African-'Leftists'. These are the interpretations of Franz Fanon (1968) and Amilcar Cabral (1980). Fanon's interpretation is 'forward looking' -- Fanon understands national culture as the outcome of social struggle. The struggle dynamically creates a new context within which subjective and objective forces interact in new ways. Out of this dynamic emerges something new -- the new unified national culture. Cabral, on the other hand -- despite his (rather unrigorous) use of Marxist terminology -- produces an essentially 'backward-looking' nationalist interpretation of national culture. Cabral's is a culture of conserving and then returning to the past ways -- ie. of "return", "re-Africanization", "reconversion", one's "own history" and "conservation" (see Cabral, 1980:143-147). Cabral therefore does not conceive of culture as something new and emerging, but rather as something to be regained. Cabral's is hence a conservative-nationalist interpretation of culture, while Fanon's is a progressive interpretation.

Paulin Hountondji (1983) has pointed out the problematics of the conservative-nationalist interpretations. The conservative (backward looking) interpretations are able to serve comprador nationalist groups in their (top down) populist manipulation of the masses. From a popular-leftist perspective Fanon's interpretation is greatly preferable since it complements the bottom-up organic growth (culturalist) understanding of culture.

[8] The crisis of state socialism in the second half of the 1980s, especially the severe crisis of 1989/90, tended to boost the confidence of the Right, free marketeers/capitalists, etc. This served to obscure the remaining deep (if not deepening) structural crisis within capitalism. (Of course, post-modernists would suggest that BOTH capitalism and state socialism suffer from the same terminal illness -- they are premised upon now discredited 'structural' assumptions).

Certainly 1990 sees capitalism in crisis. Could it be that Marx's long-predicted crisis of capitalism may be upon us at last? But this crisis has come just after 'Marxism' has been severely discredited by the excesses of Leninist vanguardism. This would be a profoundly ironic turn of events.

[9] The ideology of technocracy (see Habermas, 1980: Chapter 6) and of 'scientifically' managed social advancement was, of course, not confined to capitalism. East European state socialism adopted the same ideological discourse. For heirs of the Frankfurt School, like Habermas, this is not really that surprising, because the School had seen it as an outcome of Stalin's attempt to catch up with the capitalist West.

Post-modernists would also not be surprised at finding technocratic ideology in both capitalism and state socialism since they would see both as premised upon the same underlying structuralist discourse.

[10] Habermas' 'public sphere' is a Eurocentric concept, describing a social form historically and materially specific to a particular stage of capitalist development in Europe and North America. Consequently, care is needed when importing the concept into Southern Africa (although this writer believes that this concept is NOW applicable in South Africa because South Africa HAS been integrated into MNC).

Despite the Eurocentric specificity of the concept as used by Habermas, it is also possible to find a clear analogy of the destruction of the 'public sphere' by capitalist technocracy in South Africa. As capitalist relations of production penetrated Southern Africa, following the discovery of diamonds and gold, it destroyed the democratic 'public spheres' then existing in traditional African society, eg the kgotla (or 'village councils').

## Chapter 4. BUILDING A DEMOCRATIC LEFTIST HEGEMONY UPON THE LEGACY OF A POPULARIST COUNTER-HEGEMONY

Rethinking leftist praxis in South Africa will require more than theoretical reconstruction (as per Chapters 2 and 3). If leftist praxis is to be 'reconstructed' in the South African context, then local leftist practice, and related theory, will also need to be taken account of. In this regard South African leftists leave a rich legacy upon which any South African-based New Leftist 'reconstruction' can draw. Callinicos (1986) provides an overview of this work from 1912 to 1986. See also Deacon (1988).

South Africa is well placed for any attempt to build a pluralist-democratic leftist hegemony because of the legacy of the popularist alliance politics of the 1980s counter-hegemony phase. It is a legacy that penetrated deep into the grassroots struggle against apartheid during the 1980s. During this decade millions of South Africans were 'democratized' through their engagement with the popularist structures of resistance. So ingrained did democratic practice become amongst those sectors of the South African Left organized by the MDM that it became an organizational 'problem' after the unbanning of the ANC. The year 1990 saw the ANC struggling to adjust its organizational practices (away from clandestine-militarized hierarchical structures) to cope with the grassroots demand for participative democracy coming from the former MDM constituency (WIP, No 69, 1990).

Even the Leninist-vanguardists have not been unaffected by these democratic practices. So whereas the European New Left constructed their ideas in opposition to a Leninist interpretation of leftist praxis, in the South African context it is possible to envisage Leninists sliding relatively easily into a pluralist leftist hegemony

because of the counter-hegemonic legacy. Because of decades of working with non Leninists within a popularist alliance, South Africa's Leninists came to 'adopt' aspects of this style (Louw, 1989c; and SACP, 1990:41-6).

The (Leninist-Marxist) SACP adopted the 'two-stage' theory of revolution in 1928, as well as the tactic of working within a broader counter-hegemonic (ANC) alliance since the 1950s (Callinicos, 1986:8-13). Both represented de facto 'reconstructions' of leftist praxis. These policies represent some of the earliest de facto moves by any Communist Party in the world away from a narrow 'workerism', and a narrow 'materialist' historical materialism. Hence despite the Stalinism of the SACP (in terms of its internal organization and 'rhetoric'), the SACP has ironically been a part of the 'reconstructive' process of leftist praxis in a democratic-socialist direction. (The SACP has in fact been criticized by South African 'ultra-leftists' -- outside of the ANC-SACP alliance -- for its 'collaborationist' stance) (see the position of WOSA in WIP, No 72 1991:16 and in SAHA, 1990:25-6).

The SACP 'reconstruction' was not based upon the work of the "anti-Stalinist Marxists and Communists" (Jordan, 1990:88), of the sort discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis. In fact Pallo Jordan (1990:88) called upon the SACP to pay attention to this work. Rather, the 'two stage' theory represented a Marxist-Leninist 'concession' to 'realpolitik'. In other words, it represented an offer to help and work alongside non-Leninists in order to create a 'bourgeois democracy'. It was hoped that this would later lead to conditions which would favour the creation of a 'full' socialist state. Since the

1950s the SACP worked with nationalists, social democrats and left-liberals with NO real guarantee that their work would help them achieve their goal of a Leninist-Marxist society. It is precisely this pluralist-based collaborative work that has characterized the South African struggle. Of course, the SACP's assumption is that there will be a continuous 'flow' from stage one to stage two. As Slovo of the SACP said:

> (Since) the liberation struggle should bring to power a revolutionary democratic alliance dominated by the proletariat and peasantry the post-revolutionary phase can surely become the first stage in a continuous process along the road to socialism: a road that ultimately can only be charted by the proletariat and its natural allies (Slovo in Davidson, 1976).

In fact, this particular (two stage) policy is unlikely to lead to the achievement of a 'full' socialist society because of inertia. See Erwin (1985:67-8) and Lambert (1980). The reality is that the South African struggle is more likely to end up in one of two other hegemonic patterns (especially given the world balance of power following the collapse of Soviet power). These are a nationalist (Rightist) comprador arrangement with MNC, or a Left-leaning pluralist hegemony of a socialist-democratic nature. Marxist-Leninists would be dissatisfied with both these arrangements. New Leftists would, however, only be dissatisfied with the first option.

However, both Marxist Leninists and New Leftists would share a similar concern at the possibility of the mutation of a socialist-democratic hegemony into nationalist (Rightist) comprador hegemony. Such a concern would be that 'stage one' (ie. the first government voted in on a one-person-one-vote basis) would most likely be a socialist-democratic society. It would be based on an 'inclusivist' (non-racial) nationalism and presumably dominated by a 'non-racial',

but primarily black petit bourgeoisie. However, once such a stage is achieved, a 'working arrangement' (alliance?) between this new petit bourgeois ruling group and MNC (and even possibly including the 'reformed-Right) would become quite likely. Sections of the Left would be co-opted [1]. Such a Right-leaning alliance would de facto set the stage for transforming South Africa into another African comprador state [2] (albeit that South Africa would probably be the African sub-metropole of MNC).

In the face of such co-option of 'the struggle' three options would be open to the Left: firstly, the workerist route would be a (withdrawal into?) trade unionist defence of labour rights (a possible Cosatu option). Secondly, some might opt to return to 'armed struggle'. This is a possible PAC route (WIP, No 72, 1991:14-15). And thirdly, engagement in a (pluralistic) competition for support amongst the diverse interest groups of society. The latter would represent the New Leftist route.

For New Leftists the possibility of the co-option of 'the struggle ' would require engagements in hegemonic labour to prevent the mutation of a socialist-democratic hegemony into a nationalist (Rightist) comprador hegemony. Or, if co-option occurs, to win back hegemonic influence by winning support for leftist policies from as many people in society as possible. It is in this regard that a reconstructed leftist praxis (based upon the work of Gramsci, the Frankfurt School, Poulantzas, Mattelart, and Habermas) comes into its own. Such a reconstruction precisely directs leftists into a concern with political, cultural and hegemonic struggle. Socialism is not proclaimed (or enforced), it is worked for hegemonically (within a pluralist struggle). It is also work that requires a good understanding of

'superstructural' struggle (and hence requires that attention be paid to Enzensberger, Volosinov, Althusser, Tomaselli, Gramsci, and Habermas). Such New Leftist hegemonic labour would aim to produce a (pluralist) leftist alliance that draws its support from a wide variety of groups who suffer domination and exploitation at the hands of MNC. (In other words, 'socialism' need not be confined to only a 'working class' phenomenon). But such an alliance has to be premised upon the guarantee of social pluralism, and free competition for support. (In other words, there can be no freedom for leftists to build a leftist hegemony apart from a wider freedom for all social forces and interests) [3].

The development of a democratic ethos amongst those on the Left would be assisted by encouraging the extension and strengthening of the widest possible leftist alliance, or 'Patriotic Front' (ie. ranging from left-liberals through to Leninists). Such an alliance would be based on a recognition of diversity within the Left. Recognition of diversity would require the development of mechanisms of compromise. Learning to make such an alliance work would seem to be the most effective way of learning how to operate a democratic system of compromise and give and take of the Poulantzian/Gramscian variety -- ie. building unity upon difference. There is a recognition that unity has to be 'made' not 'proclaimed' [4].

Possible constituents of a leftist-alliance

Many of the possible constituents of a South African leftist bloc ('Patriotic Front') already exist. (Others may yet emerge). Building and maintaining a leftist ruling hegemony will require developing alliances and compromises of the sort discussed by Gramsci and

Poulantzas. It will also require engaging in on-going ideological competition with a rightist-bloc for support.

The possible building blocks of a leftist hegemony have emerged out a complex interplay of forces and interests. Three main forms of leftist opposition to apartheid emerged:

(a) A specifically 'black' left-populist politics, such as BCM, PAC, and AZAPO. These groups have been influenced by, amongst others, 'Pan-Africanism' (see Nkrumah, in Mutiso & Rohio:341-46), Franz Fanon (1968), Mao Tse Tung and aspects of USA 'black power' (see Biko, 1988). There was some overlap between this category (a) and category (b) below with the formation of the National Forum (NF) in 1983. The NF rejected the 'two stage' theory and opted instead for a revolution leading directly to socialism. The "NF Manifesto" (of 1983) did represent something of a move away from populism, calling for: (1) anti-racism and anti-imperialism; (2) non-collaboration; (3) independent working class organizations; and (4) an opposition to alliances with ruling-class parties. (The fourth clause represents a direct opposition to the UDF policy of incorporating white organizations like Nusas, Jodac, DDA, etc).

Since 1990 the PAC, despite their problems, emerged as the victors of this political camp (WIP, No 72, 1991:14-15). AZAPO (and BC ideology in general) have ceased to be a major political factor (WIP No 72, 1991:18).

(b) Another form has been the Worker's Organization for Socialist Action (WOSA), Cape Action League (CAL), the Unity Movement (UM) and/or New Unity Movement (NEUM), a largely (but not exclusively) Western Cape phenomenon, which is sometimes labelled 'Trotskyist'.

This represents the smallest of the three sectors of 'leftist politics', and has taken the form of a workerist populism. There has been an alliance between NEUM and CAL and AZAPO through the NF). Both WOSA and NEUM oppose the SACP's 'two stage' theory of revolution (ie. they favour a 'one stage' approach and a 'hard-line' non-collaborative approach). This approach is strongly associated with the work of Neville Alexander (see WIP, No 72, 1991:16-17).

(c) The largest of the three forms has been the non-racial popularist leftist politics associated with the UDF, MDM and ANC (ie. the 'Congress' tradition). Since 1990 this genre has been represented by the ANC-SACP-Cosatu alliance (within which the ANC is de facto the 'senior partner'). It is a genre that sprang to prominence during the 1980s following the formation of the UDF in Cape Town in 1983. From 1983 to 1989 the UDF was virtually the 'internal political wing' of the (then banned) ANC. The UDF and Cosatu grew together (under shared NP/State pressure) during the second half of the 1980s. The result was the 'unofficial' and 'amorphous' MDM alliance of the UDF and Cosatu. After the unbanning of the ANC in 1990 the need for the MDM disappeared. Because of the alliance nature of this non-racial camp, it has produced a diversity of 'positions' (often in a 'tense' relationships with one another). For example: popularists; workerists; SACP; Marxists outside the SACP; the Marxist Workers Tendency; the 'Cabal'; a neo-'Wosa' group; Izingwevu; and a host of positions taken by Left-intellectuals (see WIP, No 72, 1991: 19-21).

Ideally a (Poulantzian) Leftist-alliance would incorporate the

full range of leftist opinions including Maoists, Leninists, Greens, social democrats, liberals and even anti-comprador nationalists. The legacy of the ANC's past creates a valuable precedent for South African leftists. The ANC's policy has been that various different positions (ranging from nationalist to Leninist) have been incorporated on the basis of:

(a) each component party having to accept the alliance's common goal (which was to remove apartheid); and

(b) the right of every party in the alliance to try and 'push' their own particular strategy, approach and/or policy as long this is not destructive to the broader goals of the alliance.

Perhaps more important for a New Leftist approach to hegemony construction was the work done by the UDF during the 1980s (especially the first half of the 1980s). The UDF was formed in Cape Town on 20 August 1983, following a call earlier in 1983 by Allan Boesak. It represented the de facto hijacking by the 'Congress' tradition of the AZAPO idea to form a 'National Forum Committee'. (The NF was in fact also formed in 1983). The UDF was explicitly characterized by a popular-democratic approach to political mobilization (UDF, n/d). The UDF's approach overlapped with, for example, the popular approach of the Nicaraguan Sandinistas (Mattelart, 1986) and Poland's Solidarity Movement. This approach blends easily with positions articulated by the likes of Poulantzas (Eurocommunism); Mattelart, and Habermas.

The UDF was precisely characterized by its attempt to incorporate as wide a cross-section of the population into anti-apartheid action as possible. It was organized as an alliance unified not so much by a rigid hierarchy, or a single ideology, but by the common goal of trying to shorten the life of the apartheid state. This led to conscious

efforts to avoid being exclusively 'black' politics, and to incorporate 'non-black' members (See Jodac News, No.1, 1988:14-15; and Upfront, Vol 2 No 1, 1989:21-3). As the then-UDF publicity secretary stated: "We are non-racial, which means that we embrace all races...and all classes" (Lekota, 1983:80). The non-racial UDF alliance sometimes took the form of groups that transcended race, such as the National Education Union of South Africa (NEUSA), and sometimes assumed a form of mobilization 'using' (for 'non-racial ends) 'racial' mobilization [5], such as the Natal Indian Congress (NIC); Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee (JODAC); Cape Democrats; Durban Democratic Association (DDA), and even an Afrikaans Congress Movement (Upfront, Vol 2 No 1, 1989:31-5). Further the UDF transcended class, incorporating on the one hand workers (and even the lumpenproletariat) (eg. Inanda Youth Congress), and on the other hand incorporating the middle class (eg. TASA, UDUSA, Jodac, etc).

Building such a leftist cross-class alliance of this sort was not an easy process. In the early 1980s there was very strong opposition to such an alliance from left-trade unionists inside FOSATU because it was believed this would lead to workers becoming subordinate to petit bourgeois interests (see Lambert 1980). This led to tremendous conflict between workerists and populists during the first half of the 1980s. (See the 'workerism-popularism' debate -- Erwin, 1985; Innes, 1985 & 1986; and Cronin, 1986). But the dynamics of the struggle in the 1980s overwhelmed the workerist position; it simply proved unrealistic to expect unionized workers to stay out of the UDF (petit bourgeois, popularist)-led community-based struggles in the townships. The November 1984 stay-away represented the 'overwhelming' of the

workerist position by the momentum of the popularist struggle -- the trade unions found themselves dragged into the stay-aways on the terms of the popularists. The end of the 'purist' workerist position was institutionalized in November 1985 when Cosatu was formed: Cosatu representing the unionized alliance of workerists and popularists. Cosatu refused to affiliate to either the UDF or NFC. But the situation on the ground was too strong, and Cosatu quickly found itself pulled into the UDF orbit, although it fought hard to keep some semblance of 'distance'. Ironically it was the rightist-State, during the increasingly repressive State of Emergency period, which (through simultaneous attacks on both organizations) finally sealed a de facto 'union' between the UDF and Cosatu. The result, the 'working alliance' of the MDM, represented an alliance between the organized black working class and elements of the leftist petit bourgeoisie. This arrangement was fully sealed by the ANC-SACP-Cosatu alliance of 1990. But by 1991 Cosatu was again trying to distance itself from the 'politicans'.

The UDF itself consisted of a loose alliance of committees, each mobilizing a different 'sector' -- eg. youth, student, religious, trade union, women, and community groups. The latter represented an especially interesting 'public sphere'-type of mobilization, in which membership was mobilized around local 'civic' issues like rents, rates, education and public transport (See Grest & Hughes, 1984). This alliance was held together by a network of communication rather than by formalized central leadership. This allowed for maximum local autonomy which improved the UDF's capacity to react to local issues, while the communication network allowed for 'national' debate and 'policy formulation' to take place. In the process the UDF created South Africa's first mass-based participative democratic culture during the

first half of the 1980s. It was a political genre that would have pleased the culturalists (like Raymond Williams) because it gave maximal space to the 'masses' to be 'active' on their own behalf.

The rightist-state invested considerable energy in trying to smash this democratic culture during the State of Emergency (the second half of the 1980s). The implementation of the States of Emergency all but destroyed the effective functioning of the democratic communication network the UDF had built up, and seriously weakened the local committees themselves. This allowed the UDF affiliates to start 'drifting apart' from 1987, which increasingly threatened to transform the UDF from an alliance into an anarchy. This 'organizational anarchy' tended, in some instances, to produce atrophy in each of the component parts over a period of time. In other instances, in the place of democratic organization emerged an anarchistic youth who were generally unemployed, alienated and militarized. In fact, by the end of the 1980s, this anarchistic-militarized youth bore much resemblance to the Khmer Rouge of Cambodia. They were outside the effective control of any leftist structure, whether UDF or ANC. (In fact, the militant-anarchy of the township youth has posed enormous problems for ANC organizers since the ANC's unbanning). In the end the rightist state proved unable to smash the leftist struggle. However, in the process the Right did wreak considerable damage upon democratic popular practices.

It was the above state of affairs that led to the rise of undemocratic practices such as those associated with the top-down leadership style of 'the Cabal' in Natal (see New African, Vol 2 No 48: 1 and 7). Cabalistic practices violate the theoretical premises of New Leftism. However, from a practical point of view, it is necessary to

recognize that the Left will sometimes have to adopt undemocratic strategies because these are the only methods that work when facing massively repressive conditions. However, instead of seeing this as necessarily ultimately producing an undemocratic political culture it might be more useful to assume that leftists are able to differentiate between short, medium and long term aims. Hence using a Leninist (vanguard-clandestine) approach in the short-to-medium term may be compatible with the long term creation of a democratic political culture as long as leftists using such methods abandon them, when possible, in favour of democratic methods. The real problem with the Leninist approach is thus not the approach per se; rather it is the danger of inertia. Those using Leninist methods during a counter-hegemony phase may get 'used to' behaving in a clandestine and vanguardist way. This means that an approach suitable for a counter-hegemony era is carried over into an era when leftists constitute the ruling hegemony, and no longer really need to use such methods. The possibility of 'inertia' is, however, a real one, as seen all to clearly in the case of the USSR.

In building a participative New Leftist democracy much will have to be done to rebuild those counter-hegemonic structures and practices that were destroyed by the Right, the anarchistic-youth and by 'cabalistic' practices. In doing this the New Left needs to carefully examine the popularist legacy of the UDF/MDM's specific rejection of populism. 'Populism' in South Africa has been seen in the form of Inkatha on the Right (see Mare, 1987), or by Black Consciousness on the Left. Populism represents a 'top-down' manipulation of popular resentments which are then wielded into a political force for change (usually, but not always, of a reformist nature -- eg. Buthelezi's

Inkatha). Popular practices, on the other hand, attempt to generate a grassroots, and decentralized approach towards mobilizing popular resentments. This approach specifically rejects the top-down 'leadership' style of populism (UDF, n/d:23-25). Because it is a 'diversified' power, popular political practice is an open-ended process. It is also a political practice concerned with winning grassroots support (ie. articulating grassroots interests), and/or competing with other political groups for political support. This is a 'totality' struggle -- material interests will guide the battle; but superstructural techniques will underpin any success achieved.

So to be successful in a popularist struggle (in both a counter hegemony and hegemony phase) requires of leftists that they get to grips with the superstructural techniques of hegemonic competition and/or hegemony-building. In addition to Gramsci, the ('ideological/cultural struggle') theoretical work of Althusser, Volosinov, Tomaselli and Enzensberger is useful in this regard. But, more importantly, the Left needs to learn to use the superstructures for the development of democratic social interaction and a democratic ethos of the sort discussed by Habermas and Mattelart. However, in undertaking this work leftists need not confine themselves to theory because much useful practical 'superstructural' work has been undertaken by leftists in Nicaragua (Mattelart, 1986), Britain (Nigg & Wade, 1980) and South Africa (Tomaselli & Louw, 1991). The popularist (UDF/MDM) camp, in particular, gave rise to much innovative leftist-media work during the 1980s. This work will be examined in Chapter 5.

FOOTNOTES

[1] It is in this regard that the work of the Frankfurt School on the culture industry and co-option becomes valuable -- ie. this work would be valuable for any leftist analysis of Rightist/MNC attempts to co-opt sections of the Left camp.

[2] This has, of course, been precisely the socialist critique of post-1980 Zimbabwe (Astrow, 1983).

[3] In this regard it can be noted that the amazing South African plurality of interests (ie. the existence of large constituencies ranging from Left to Right) gives a ruling hegemony only two options: (1) totalitarian control and/or suppression of diversity (an option the NP tried and failed to implement); or (2) building a hegemony based upon the recognition of pluralist-diversity.

[4] From a New Leftist perspective, one of the unfortunate legacies of the South African struggle is the term 'the People'. This term has been extremely valuable from a rhetorical-mobilizing point of view. However, it has become reified, and now serves as a vehicle for 'proclaiming' support. In other words, it serves to blind many on the Left that South African Leftists do not have the support of 100% of the population (which is what 'The People' implies to many). The term therefore now serves to blind leftists to the need for major hegemonic labour in order to expand the percentage of the population who do support the them. For any group seeking to build a leftist popular-democracy the term can thus too easily become a negative one.

[5] The 'racial' mobilization by the UDF was largely necessitated by the 'success' of the NP's apartheid policies. By the 1980s South Africans were, by in large, segregated into racial 'group areas'. As a result, trying to work cross-racially was, for one thing, geographically difficult to practically implement. Secondly, trying to mobilize around 'community issues' tended to result in what appeared to be 'racial' mobilization because communities were racially segregated. Hence the different (and geographically 'isolated') racial communities the apartheid policies created came to have different local community concerns/problems. These were not strictly 'racial' issues, so much as 'local' issues. However, in segregated South Africa, 'local' generally became 'racial'. Examples of such community-issues related organizations have been: the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation (PEBCO); and the Cape Areas Housing Action Committee (CAHAC). An interesting development, however, occurred when during 1988 the Durban Housing Action Committee (DHAC) succeeded in undoing the 'usual' pattern and briefly linked 'Indian', 'coloured' and 'white' residents together to oppose rent increases.

## Chapter 5. COUNTER-HEGEMONY AND COMMUNICATION: THE SOUTH AFRICAN LEFT-WING PRESS OF THE 1980s

The 1980s was a decade that saw, on the one hand, Right-wing power seriously challenged for the first time; and on the other hand, the Left-wing built up significant counter-hegemonic power. Of central importance to the New Leftist theme of this thesis is the fact that this counter-hegemonic power came to be exercised through a left-popularist genre of resistance. This form of struggle represents a de facto re-construction of leftist praxis in the direction of the New Leftist multi-class alliance form of (counter) hegemony building. More importantly, this popularist era also saw some significant moves towards the use of the superstructures for praxis. In particular, the 1980s witnessed the development of a left-wing press: a press that was often centrally tied to the construction of the popular counter-hegemony.

This chapter will: (1) Provide a working definition of the left-wing press(es) (within a wider categorization of the South African press); (2) provide a breakdown of the left-wing press into a proposed sub-categorization; (3) give a brief history of this press (including the state's attempts to smash it); (4) pay particular attention to the progressive-alternative press (a sub-category of the left-wing press), especially as regards the development of a framework for generating a 'theory and practice' of the South African progressive- alternative press; and (5) link the progressive-alternative press (and to a lesser extent the social democrat press) to this thesis' concern for the development of a (New) Left popular democratic hegemony. In other words, this chapter will examine the relationship of the progressive alternative press to the building of a left hegemonic alliance.

Categorization of the Press

A short-hand classification of the whole spectrum of the Press in South Africa will help to put the left-wing press into perspective. Ten genres (see Tomaselli & Louw, 1989) can be identified:

(i) The Afrikaans press 'linked' to the NP. This Press (like the NP) has shifted its position over the years from neo-fascist in the 1950s, through various shades of (pro-apartheid) conservativsm in the 1960s-1980s, to being supportive of a 'reformed-Right' position in the 1990s. (For a fuller discussion of this shift see Louw, 1991). Examples of this category of Press would be Beeld, Die Burger, Vaderland and Rapport. This Press represents a hybrid of the social responsibility genre of journalism and elements of the libertarian genre (although the libertarian genre is read through a conservative framework). During the 1950s and 1960s this press served the NP -- which in turn served a hegemonic alliance of Afrikaner capital (largely rural-Cape based); the Afrikaner petit bourgeoisie; and the Afrikaner working class. During this period Adorno et al's (1982) work on the national socialist authoritarian personality would have had much explanatory power within South Africa viz this sector. The NP's success in transferring wealth into its constituency's hands produced a growing Afrikaner urban middle class. This modified the NP during the 1970s-1980s into a party serving a primarily middle class constituency. Its press has consequently, since the 1980s, produced material not unlike the technocratic ideology described by Habermas (1980) -- ie. a (New Right) 'conservative technicism' and 'free enterprise' ideology. The journalists working on this press serve as excellent examples of

'organic intellectuals' -- a role they played within the Afrikaner nationalist hegemony;

(ii) The English conservative-liberal press linked to monopoly mining-finance capital, eg. The Star, Pretoria News, Daily News, Sunday Times, The Argus and Business Day. This press can be classified as falling into a social responsibility 'adaption' of the libertarian genre of journalism. Following Pinnock (1991), this category (together with the Afrikaans Press will be termed the 'guild press'. This press strongly advocates a 'free enterprise' ideology and was critical of apartheid when this policy was seen to be hindering the interests of local mining-finance capital and MNC. The Frankfurt School's work on the culture industry (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1979; Marcuse, 1968) and this industry's 'cult of technocracy' (Marcuse, 1968; Habermas, 1980) has great explanatory power for those seeking to explain the workings of this press as the mobilizers of an ideology that serves the interests of a capitalist-technocracy;

(iii) Newspapers owned by white capital and aimed at black readers, eg. City Press and the Sowetan. This press operates within the libertarian/social responsibility model. It is clearly integrated into the state/capital's policy of creating values which 'encourage' the formation of a black middle class -- or what Gramsci would have termed the superstructural 'trenches' of the ruling hegemony. The Frankfurt School's work on the culture industry as a mechanism of co-opting oppositional practices and 'stilling' the dialectic (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1979; Marcuse, 1968) is helpful in understanding the underpinning agendas on

these newspapers. The editorial policies of these papers are inclined to draw upon a mixture of 'free enterprise' and Black Consciousness ideologies (see Chetty, 1988:32);

(iv) Regional newspapers and free sheets (the latter are sometimes called 'knock-&-drops') often tied to Guild Press groups (see Louw, 1991), but which offer 'apolitical' local interest items, together with a platform for the encouragement of a local commercialism. Examples of this are: South Coast Sun, Kempton Express, Southern Suburbs Tattler, Berea Mail, and Ezase Mlazi. A sub-category of this press is the rural 'platteland' press. Some of these publications are owned by the press groups, but many are independent. Examples would be: Paarl Post and Graaff-Reinet Advertiser. The 'knock-&-drop' press is an especially good example of what the Frankfurt School termed the culture industry. It serves to 'kill the dialectic' by serving as the very opposite of Habermas' 'public sphere'. (This is ironic, given that a local press is most able to generate a real grassroots dialogue, and/or provide vehicles for the articulation of (grassroots) popular culture;

(v) Social-democrat independent press, eg. Weekly Mail, and Vrye Weekblad. This press' pioneering work in co-opting Information Age technology for leftist parallels the tactics proposed by Enzensberger and Benjamin;

(vi) Progressive alternative press, eg. Grassroots, Saamstaan, Ukusa, Izwe Lase Rhini, and The Eye. Grassroots, in the period 1980-1985 came the closest to a Habermasian public sphere in the South African context. It is also a press that conforms closely to Mattelart's notion of popular communication;

(vii) Left-commercial press eg. South, New African and New Nation. This press has operated as a vehicle of leftist rhetoric (ie. the sort of communication model described by Lenin);

(viii) (Prior to 1990) an underground press tied to banned political organizations eg. Mayibuye (ANC) and Umsebenzi (SACP). This press served as a rhetorical vehicle (in Leninist fashion) for these political groups (Chimutengwende, 1978);

(ix) Neo-fascist (pro-apartheid) press representing those who broke away from the NP in 1969 (HNP) and 1982 (CP). Examples are: Die Patriot linked to the CP, Die Afrikaner published by the HNP, Die Stem put out by the AWB, and the South African Observer. This press serves a constituency which Adorno et al's Authoritarian Personality goes a long way toward explaining; and,

(x) Newspapers tied to the comprador-bantustan infrastructures, for example, Ilanga (which the Argus Company sold to Buthelezi's Inkatha in 1987).

This thesis is really only interested in categories (v), (vi) and (vii), especially category (vi). What the above categorization does is challenge the 'commonsensical' definition of a so-called 'alternative press' that emerged in the 1980s. It is challenged because it is an unrigorous 'definition' (see Groenewald et al, 1988). It was popularized by journalists, and eagerly latched onto by the NP because the term served to justify their repression of media opposed to 'law and order'. The vague use by the NP and the guild press, of the term 'alternative' to encompass a broad spectrum of publications ranging from right-wing newspapers like Patriot, Die Afrikaner and Die Stem to

left-wing newspapers like South, Grassroots and New Nation (Natal Mercury, 26.8.87), indicates nothing more than the Right's use of a simplistic binary opposition classification of the media. This can then be used to justify suppressing any 'voices' the Right does not like.

Unfortunately, some of those who pioneered the left-wing press in South Africa contributed to establishing the currency of the unfortunate term 'alternative press'. For example Spong (1985) and Johnson (1982). Hence, in the feasibility study which led up to the establishment of the New Nation, Shaun Johnson (1982:21.) presented a working definition of the term "alternative publication":

> In essence the requirements are that an alternative publication must have claim to independence, in the sense that it is not directly or indirectly controlled by ruling vested interest groups such as the state or the commercial monopoly press groups in South Africa. Secondly, it must have as its central purpose the provision of some kind of alternative: political, social, economic, cultural or ideological to the South African status quo.

The notion of 'alternative' is not particularly helpful when attempting to analyze the media in South Africa. It is too all-encompassing and diffuse -- it needs to be replaced. The term 'left-wing' is suggested as having the necessary specificity.

## The South African left-wing presses

Along with Pinnock (1989a), this thesis will use the term left-wing press. The term 'left-wing' is narrow enough to include only those media which were part of the South African leftist (counter-hegemonic) alliance -- ie. categories (v) to (viii). It also allows for the articulation of the differences between types of media that served this counter-hegemony -- eg. four different leftist press categories.

Three newspapers will be used in this chapter to illustrate the

three types of left-wing press These are the Weekly Mail for the social-democrat independent press; Grassroots for the progressive-alternative press; and South for the left-commercial press. These three presses are central to any understanding of the role of communication to the building of a (New) leftist popular hegemony (or counter-hegemony) [1]. These three forms of press were central to the development during the 1980s, of an anti-apartheid leftist movement organized as a popularist alliance. They used what amounted to Poulantzian alliance-politics, and a Mattelart-type communication policy. Sectors of this press operated for a time as de facto grassroots 'public spheres' (Louw, 1989a). What characterized these left-wing presses was that they were different from the approach, form and particularly content of the other categories of press as listed above. This is especially true of the 'progressive alternative' sub-category, which is why this thesis will concentrate primarily on this sub-category.

The progressive alternative press (category vi) offers New Leftist popularists a potential model for building micro-level public spheres. In other words, developing democratic dialogue at the grassroots community level through using the media. In a future South Africa, where the pressures for co-option will probably be great, such grassroots public spheres may be invaluable for the left. They are perhaps the best guarantee of generating a deep-penetrating grassroots leftism able to prevent, or at least resist comprador co-option. A functioning grassroots public sphere would make more difficult a populist (rhetorical) manipulation of the masses by any leadership group that was co-opted. In addition, if MNC is successful at co-

opting the South African struggle, then grassroots public spheres would at least serve to keep leftist ideals alive at grassroots level. In some contexts the Left perhaps needs to consider such a strategy as more valuable than accepting national power. In other words, if acceptance of power actually means being co-opted by MNC (such as has happened in contemporary Spain, where there is a socialist 'form' and rhetoric, but with no socialist 'content' to the existing government's policy -- see Donaghy & Newton, 1989:154-5, 158-9).

The social democrat 'independent' media (category v) have also have also had a significant role to play in helping to build a South African popular left-alliance. Of all the left-wing presses this social democrat press is similar to the pluralistic Eurocommunist position of writers like Poulantzas (or perhaps even more so, to the leftism of Laclau & Mouffe). This press has served to 'mobilize' one specific sector of the wider leftist alliance -- primarily, but not exclusively, the white professional 'Left'. In reaching this sector this press served the valuable role of helping to mobilize leftist intellectuals. This is important for the realization of a Gramscian hegemony and Benjamin's 'technik'. (During the 1980s the MDM tried to organize this white professional sector through organizations like Jodac, DDA, Cape Democrats, and FFF). The social democrat independent press had a significant role to play in 'reaching' this sector of society. It thereby helped to widen the terrain upon which a (leftist) Gramscian hegemony could be constructed.

This independent press is also significant as it is a child of the Information Age within the Southern African context. The Weekly Mail co-opted the PC/desk-top ('superstructural era') technology of MNC, and built out of it a leftist 'gap'. Such an Enzensberger (or Walter

Benjamin)-type superstructural praxis serves as an excellent illustration of this thesis' position that Information Age technology need not only be considered a 'First World' plaything.

The social democrat press can be defined as being generally supportive of the Left but remaining independent of any specific political movement. It provided a platform for the expression of 'leftist' anti-apartheid messages, but adhered to 'objective' journalistic practices of the libertarian genre. This genre has generated a (liberal) 'public sphere'. This serves to call into question the Right's simplistic lumping together of this press with the 'progressive alternative press' (Tomaselli and Louw, 1988:3). Specifically this independent press adopted journalistic practices that were characterized by:

* something of an 'intellectualized' re-reading of the South African situation with an anti-apartheid 'liberatory' intent. This approach is not unlike Benjamin's notion of Technik applied to the journalistic sphere;
* falling outside the accepted journalistic practices of the South African guild press (see Louw, 1983, 1984) -- ie. the 'independent' press defined itself as falling outside what the Frankfurt School termed the culture industry (serving capitalist-technocracy); but
* which was never as partisan or rhetorical (Leninist?) as the practices of the other leftist media;
* which was never 'organically' linked to community and worker groups in the same way as the progressive alternative press has been; and

* which has often used a 'legalistic strategy' (at least up until when the Weekly Mail was closed by the Minister for the month of November 1988). As Anton Harber (1988) said: "we were journalists acting as lawyers. We studied statutes; we spent a great deal of time with lawyers ... we carved out a whole niche for ourselves simply by re-interpreting the law in an aggressive and pro-active way".

The 'independent' press adopted something of a hybrid of the 'conventional' libertarian media practices and of progressive alternative media practices.

This particular 'independent' approach to journalism is not unrelated to the sort of readership it attracts. This readership would often respond negatively to the more openly partisan "advocacy" ('rhetorical') approach (Johnson, 1982:2.19) of the progressive alternative press. But those reading this media would also see as positive any attempts to 'distance' the media from the control of 'capital'. Hence this media -- such as the Weekly Mail and Vrye Weekblad -- was characterized by specific attempts to resist being controlled by capitalist interests. For example, the Weekly Mail specifically excludes its non-staff investors from having any say in policy/management decisions. However, this same press has operated within the 'logic' of South Africa's capitalist economic system in so far as it operates as registered capitalist enterprises, and, to a considerable extent, apply 'marketing' practices. Weekly Mail, is owned by WM Publications: a co-operative of journalists (who founded and work on it) and local investors. Vrye Weekblad is controlled by a company called Wending Publikasies Bpk. Both companies are 'independent' of (local or international) monopoly capital.

The progressive alternative press and left-commercial press (categories vi and vii) are different from the social democrat press in so far as they are both explicitly partisan and not averse to using rhetoric in order to 'mobilize' leftist forces. However, categories (vi) and (vii) are different in so far as the left-commercial press attempts to produce news as opposed to facilitating a community 'public sphere'. I will examine this difference in more depth later when the Cape media activist shift from Grassroots to South is discussed. For this thesis the difference is a crucial one. The left-commercial genre adopts something of a 'top-down' approach to communication and hence violates the Habermasian notion of a dialogical (democratic) public sphere. However, despite differences, both the progressive alternative and left-commercial presses share certain characteristics. Both are a form or genre, of journalism which:

* is staffed by journalists who would, in general, regard themselves as 'organic intellectuals'. As media activists they have worked in a Mattelart-like fashion to build leftist hegemony;
* operates from "a Leftist theoretical position" (Tomaselli, 1986: 66), and aims to assist in developing leftist symbols. This is a de facto extension of Tomaselli and Volosinov's ideas on the 'struggle for the sign'.
* seeks to implement something of an Enzensberger-type praxis communication;
* specifically aims to "articulate the views and aspirations of leftist communities and workers" (Johnson, 1982:2.15). In other words, they explicitly cultivate an empathy with the 'underdogs' (the working class, peasants and lumpen-proletariat) and their plight. They also aim to give a voice to the non-rich, non-famous and non-powerful in

society, and to write in a way that relates to their daily 'lived experiences'. In this way grassroots popular culture has been given a space for growth in a fashion that conforms to the culturalist logic of Raymond Williams et al;

* aims to make a direct contribution, through journalism, to the strengthening, or even the initiation of, leftist organization (Patel, 1985:12-13); the "building of alliances among the people" (Johnson, 1982:2.15); building democracy (Johnson, 1982:2.30); the co-ordination of community and worker interests (Johnson, 1982: 2.16); and facilitating the development of cultural struggle. This amounts to a practical application of Gramsci's and Poulantzas' theories. Much space has consequently been given over to 'organizational' stories. Further, a form of 'advocacy' journalism has sometimes been practiced -- in which the publication itself actively initiates the call for the establishment of say 'a civic'. It does not wait for 'an event' or a 'newsworthy' individual to make 'the news', but rather activates the process itself. An example of this is Grassroots, August 1980. Thus this leftist press not only challenges the conventional libertarian journalism practices inherited by South Africans from the United Kingdom but, more importantly, strives to be organically linked to leftist community-based religious, civic, student and women's organizations and trade unions (Tomaselli and Louw, 1988:2). 'Journalism', in fact, is of secondary importance. Building community democracy takes first place (Johnson, 1982:2.16). This is an interesting articulation of the notion of 'public sphere'. This is especially true of the progressive-alternative press. For the progressive alternative press

communities are people within specific regions and neighbourhoods who have organized themselves into a coherent whole through civic, religious and other organizations and are united by a commonly perceived oppression. This is the reason this thesis places such an emphasis on the progressive alternative press. This press offers some seminal insights into how to go about building up not merely a media-operation, but more importantly, how to build up a democratic popular counter-hegemonic network in which the media play a pivotal role in generating democracy -- in the community and in the newspaper itself (Tomaselli, 1986:65);

* strives to replace eventized reporting with an explanation of context. In part, this is facilitated by the fact that the left-wing press have been weeklies rather than dailies. Tomaselli (1985:17) has stressed the importance of such contextualization in the leftist media, in general, as a way of possibly preventing the co-option of oppositional messages by the ruling hegemony. This is a genre of journalism which has aimed to inform, educate and raise the general level of critical awareness within the communities oppressed by apartheid. In other words, it has aimed to provide those in the counter-hegemony with basic information on education, housing, health, social services, and legal matters (Johnson, 1982:2.15).
* explicitly aims to expose social injustice;
* avoids the tendency to capitalize on events using sensationalism (Traber, 1985:3).
* makes no attempt to maintain any image of 'neutrality'(Johnson, 1982: 2.19). However, as Johnson notes, this does not necessarily mean a crude propagandistic approach is adopted. In fact, much store is set by factual accuracy (Johnson, 1982:2.30);

* regard themselves as accountable to left-wing structures. The progressive alternative press achieve this by way of direct community representation on the General Body and in the production process. With the left-commercial press, however, accountability is by way of left-wing leaders sitting on the Boards of control. The de facto level of accountability has varied from publication to publication;
* aims to avoid being sucked into the 'culture industry'. In the case of the progressive-alternative press this takes the form of aiming to be non-commercial, and avoiding reliance on advertising revenue. This 'avoidance', of course, creates certain practical problems regarding funding when working within a capitalist society. These problems are compounded when it is realized that hardly any commercial advertisers are interested in advertising in these publications anyway (since they attract readers without much 'disposable income'). However, since all progressive alternative presses in South Africa have been able to rely on one or other form of subsidy (Johnson, 1982:2.25; and Pinnock & Tomaselli, 1984:9) they have been able to develop relatively 'purist' advertising policies. In other words, they are being selective as to whose advertisements they accept. However, the left-commercial press have accepted the constraints of working within a capitalist society and accept advertising and the 'constraints' this implies. However, even here, there has been an attempt to guard against being co-opted by the culture industry. But after 1990, as overseas subsidies have become more difficult to secure, so the need for advertising has increased, and hence 'purist' positions have had to be modified;
* have tried to make themselves (ie. content and layout) accessible to

a readership with low levels of education (Patel, 1985:14; Tomaselli, 1986:64-5). As Johnson notes, the readership is assumed to have about a standard six level of education (1982:2.20). They have not always been successful (Louw, 1989d);

* in accordance with a long-standing leftist media tradition (see Morley et al, 1986; and Cadman, 1981), are greatly concerned with feedback from readership; and
* have paid more attention to editorial content and structuring than to administrative and financial concerns. (This is tied to a general leftist negativity towards 'business' matters). As a consequence organizational and financial problems have arisen which have, in turn, served to undermine the editorial work.

A brief overview and history of the South African left-wing press

The growth and consolidation of an internally-based left-wing press in South Africa took place in the 1980s. An important parallel development -- especially evident during the first half of the 1980s -- was the circulation of a wide range of other counter-hegemonic publications. Examples of these are anti-conscription publications; trade union publications; student and academic publications; ANC, SACP, UDF and Black Consciousness publications; religious publications; various ad hoc publications (like pamphlets); and print media 'forums' for leftist in-house debate/dialogue. Of the latter, Work in Progress (WIP) and the South African Labour Bulletin (SALB) have been of enormous importance. (SALB, for example played a crucial part in the development of the 'workerist' position during the 1970s and 1980s). The ANC operated an externally-based 'Radio Freedom'. The concentration on print is largely due to the rigid licensing-control

the South African state has exercised over the air-waves (Tomaselli, R. et al, 1989). In South Africa - at least up until the June 1986 declaration of a State of Emergency - there had been less control over internal publishing than over the air-waves.

The emergence of a left-wing press during the 1980s needs to be seen in the context of the changing patterns of resistance to apartheid since World War II. Resistance has gone through four main phases since the mid- 1950s. Briefly, these phases are:

* Phase One: during the 1950s the Congress of the People Movement was organized by the African National Congress (before its banning). This movement consisted of "a series of campaigns held in huge rallies, small houses, flats, streets and factory meetings, gatherings in kraals and on farms" (Suttner & Cronin, 1986:12). During 1954-5 'volunteers' tramped the country visiting households, and places of work, to collect the people's 'demands' for a 'constitution' for South Africa. Small group and organized interpersonal communication had been mobilized to build a grassroots counter-hegemony, through a countrywide activation of 'discussion' of 'a better future', and to develop and train cadres. This development was facilitated through the cadres having to learn to interact directly with their potential constituency.

The Congress movement attempted to create a social dialogue or rudimentary 'public sphere'. The outcome was the Kliptown meeting in 1955 where the 'demands' were collated into the 'Freedom Charter'. For the rest of phase one this Charter served as an anti-apartheid focus, and hence as a mobilizer of discussion and support for resistance. (This Charter was to resurface as a significant rallying point in the third and fourth phases).

The use of mass media during phase one was limited. Anti-apartheid

communication overwhelmingly occurred through word-of-mouth, small groups, or mass rallies.

Between 1960 and 1963 the state clamped down on the resistance movement. By the end of the Rivonia Treason Trial (1964) internal opposition had been crushed. The ANC and PAC were banned; and leaders who had not been jailed or killed, fled into exile. The media of the emerging externally-based resistance did not have a major impact inside South Africa for the rest of the 1960s (see Chimutengwende, 1978).

* Phase Two: Black Consciousness (BC) and Populism emerged during the 1970s. This was associated with the re-awakening of leftist resistance primarily amongst urbanized black petit bourgeois intellectuals. The economic downturn in the 1970s set the scene for phase two, with its two key moments being the Durban Strikes of 1973 and the Soweto uprising of 1976. The central 'institutionalization' of this re-awakening was the formation of the Black People's Convention in 1972. This was a period of accumulating intellectual resources for resistance as well as developing theoretical and journalistic skills. Out of it emerged an indigenous theory of (black) resistance. This was a form of accumulation of 'cadres and theory'. The phase was characterized by a populist 'top-down' (i.e. intellectual leadership) approach to resistance. It was also the first significant step in using mass media (newspapers, pamphlets, books, etc) for mobilization inside the country. For example, in 1970 the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) produced its first publication called SASO Newsletter (Johnson, 1985:20). This was followed by Black Review in 1972, and Biko's Black Viewpoint (Johnson, 1985:20). It was during this phase that the left-wing press was conceived. The success of BC in re-

awakening this spirit signalled its own decline [2]. The spread of the 1976 uprising across the country heralded the re-activation of mass participation in resistance (despite the fact that the state suppressed the uprising itself).

* Phase Three: From the late 1970s a shift became apparent in the organizational style of those engaged in leftist resistance. They moved away from the 'top-down' style of Populism to the 'bottom-up' style of popular organization. This shift was apparent in both political organizations (Louw, 1989) and in the independent trade union movement (Maree, 1988:21-22). In the wake of the Soweto 'mobilization' of mass participation, the populist style of BC was challenged by the embryonic emergence of 'non-intellectual' popular participation in resistance. This re-activated grassroots communication at community level. Between 1976 and 1983 the popular approach overtook and, for the most part, superceded the populist approach. Within the resultant MDM a great emphasis was subsequently placed upon democratic practices internal to the organizations. These changes were accompanied by a decline of BC ideology (ie. black exclusivism) and a re-emergence of the Freedom Charter. This was used as a rallying document of a ('Charterist') resistance built upon a multi-class, multi-race alliance. This phase came of age with the formation of the UDF in 1983. Following this event, the resistance, which became generally known as 'the struggle', picked up speed. Open revolt finally burst out during the Vaal Triangle Uprising of 1984; a revolt that grew out of the organization of an anti-Tricameral elections campaign by the UDF, NF and the independent trade unions. From there the uprising quickly spread countrywide. For the rest of the 1980s political violence was the order of the day in South Africa.

Phase three represents a style of resistance that has mastered the urban environment and its technocratic possibilities; the means of mobilizing and democratically organizing mass urban-based resistance; and a method of activating and 'institutionalizing' resistance at the community level and linking the resulting structures -- through Information Age technology -- into a resistance network. Hence it was phase three that saw the real birth of a left-wing press in South Africa.

A sub-phase within phase three was the attempt from 1986 until January 1990 to keep popular democracy alive under harsh State of Emergency conditions. During this period state repression smashed many of the the community groups built prior to 1986 (through detentions, violence and assassinations). The State of Emergencies severely damaged popular communication networks. Despite the damage done to the democratic operation of the resistance structures, the struggle itself was not subdued.

* Phase Four began with the unbanning of the ANC, PAC and SACP in 1990. The unbanning changed the entire context of leftist struggle. The change in the context was reinforced by the collapse of Soviet power which strengthened the hand of the South African right. During 1990 the Left experienced major difficulties with regard to reconstructing smashed structures and re-orienting leftist strategy and tactics towards the new context. Phase four has seen significant sectors of the left-wing press experience difficulties due to a 're-oriented' world situation. The formerly underground publications (of the ANC and SACP) lost their East European printing sponsors; and Western overseas subsidies for internally-based publications declined. The alternative

press increasingly found that the 'gap' it had filled being removed by the changed circumstances. As the editor of the Vrye Weekblad said during an SABC interview on 12 March 1991: "It is yesterday's cause to be an alternative newspaper".

Any consideration of the South African left-wing press (especially the 'popularist' genre of this press) needs to be concerned with phase three. However, if the conception-phase of this press is sought, it is necessary to go back to phase two. If a 'source' for the left-wing press is to be defined it seems reasonable to award this role to Grassroots (Johnson, 1985:21). But to understand the emergence of Grassroots in 1980 it is necessary to go back to the second phase -- to 1970 when BCM produced its first publication called SASO Newsletter (Johnson, 1985:20). However, more direct roots to Grassroots came from the BCM's 'journalist wing'. In 1971 this was formalized into the Union of Black Journalists (UBJ). The UBJ represents a significant moment in South African leftist journalism: it represents the moment when BC ideology was first institutionalized within the media world. The UBJ represented a renaissance of resistance to apartheid amongst media workers.

The UBJ grew out of the South African Journalists Association (SAJA). SAJA was developed in opposition to the liberal (and mainly white) South African Society of Journalists (SASJ). SAJA, which operated (in Johannesburg) in 1970-1971, was originally non-racial. However, it soon became a black journalists body no longer prepared to work within SASJ. By 1971 when SAJA changed its name to UBJ it was heavily BC in orientation. The influence of Steve Biko and Franz Fanon was strongly in evidence. In 1975 the UBJ launched a (BC-oriented) publication called The Bulletin (banned in 1976). In one sense The

Bulletin could be regarded as the 'pilot project' of what became the left-wing press. This was because it was the same 'spirit' within the UBJ of wanting to publish those 'black' views ignored by the 'mainstream' press which eventually motivated the formation of Grassroots. Following the banning of The Bulletin the UBJ produced another publication called Azizi Thula (in 1977) which was also banned. (see Raubenheimer, 1991).

Throughout the 1970s the re-awakening of resistance steadily developed and formed itself into a 'perceivable' BC/anti-apartheid force in society. This finally exploded in the 1976 Soweto uprising and then rapidly solidified into a counter-hegemony force on a national basis. An example of this 'national' character in the journalistic world was that the Western Cape 'coloured' branch of the SASJ resigned from the SASJ and joined the UBJ in 1976. By 1977 it was clear that the UBJ was going to be banned. (The UBJ's Bulletin had been banned in 1976). As a result the UBJ formed the Writers Association of South Africa (WASA) in March 1977, and transferred UBJ's printing press to WASA. (The UBJ was, in fact, banned in October 1977 together with 18 other BC organizations. This act set the tone for a state vs journalist conflict over the next five years). WASA adopted a clear BC approach. WASA further articulated what was essentially a New World Information Order (NWIO) approach to journalism: the idea that black journalists owed their first allegiance to their (black) community and the black struggle, and only their second allegiance to 'journalism'; and an approach which questioned 'objectivity' as articulated by the liberal press for which its members worked. (This BC and New World Information Order (NWIO) approach has continued to influence a significant sector

of black journalists right down to the present day in the form of the Media Workers Association of South Africa (MWASA). This organization replaced WASA in 1980 when WASA moved to transform itself into a trade union-type organization).

It was WASA -- under the presidency of Zwelakhe Sisulu -- which can be attributed as the 'parent' of the South African left-wing press as it was WASA that set up and funded Grassroots in 1979. The first issue of Grassroots appeared in early 1980. Grassroots was originally intended as a nationally-distributed newspaper. Although distributed nationally, Grassroots was, from the outset, primarily a Cape Town phenomenon (with some wider distribution in the Western Cape). Despite this Cape regionalism which quickly set in, Grassroots became, in a very real sense, the 'seminal' newspaper for the South African counter-hegemony. It was the model others copied, and to whom others looked for advice, training and assistance (Johnson, 1982:2.28).

From those early beginnings in 1980 the leftist press spread out to the rest of South Africa over the next six years: to Johannesburg, Grahamstown, Pretoria, Durban, Oudtshoorn, and the rural Western Cape. This developing left-wing print media has, on the whole, as pointed out by Patel (1985:14), fulfilled many different roles at different times. It has also constantly re-defined its purpose to respond dynamically to the changing needs at any given point in time. One such shift -- in keeping with a broader shift within the South African left -- was a move away from the early BC roots (of UBJ/WASA), and a general shift towards the non-racialism of the UDF. A significant contribution in the 'adaptation' away from BC within leftist journalist circles occurred in 1979 --ie. just before the launch of Grassroots -- when, at the Wilgerspruit WASA Congress, Quraish Patel delivered his paper 'In

Search of an Ideology'. This marked a transition on the Left from the dominance of BC during the 1970s to the non-racialism of the 1980s. One of the outcomes of this shift was that although Grassroots was conceptualized as a BC publication, it became the seminal publication of the non-racial UDF era.

Of the left-wing newspapers some have been 'survivors'(such as Grassroots and Weekly Mail); others did not succeed in surviving for as long (such as Ukusa; The Eye and the Daily Mail). However, as Patel has noted: "even if its life span is short, its contribution cannot be measured in the years of its existence, but in its quality and the extent to which it has advanced our struggle" (Patel, 1985:14).

The growth of these left-wing publications can be linked to several interconnected factors:

* The 1970s saw a resurgence (a 'renaissance' following the 'long night' of the 1960s) of resistance in South Africa which re-emerged at the Durban strikes of 1973 and the Soweto protests of 1976 (Patel, 1985:12). From a Frankfurt School perspective, one might say the 'dialectic' was 're-engaged' in the 1970s. This was not unrelated to a mid-1970s decline in the South African economy (linked to a more general crisis in world capitalism), but was primarily characterized by a 'subjective' interventionism. Further, Black Consciousness (BC) ideology as articulated by Biko, had succeeded, during the 1970s, in reawakening a pride within (especially) South Africa's growing urban black population. BC represented an important moment in the production of what Tomaselli would call 'signs', with which the left would mobilize and so engage in struggle with the Right. But the BC 'renaissance' was transformed by the Soweto protests and the subsequent

state repression such that by the end of the 1970s a shift was apparent in both the ruling-hegemony and counter-hegemony. One could say the success of BC (as a mobilizer) was its own undoing. Within the counter-hegemony a significant shift occurred away from BC's narrowly-based populist 'top-down' ('intellectualized') structuring of resistance. It was a shift towards a popular mass-based ('grassroots') structuring of a leftist counter hegemony. This shift was best characterized by the 1983 emergence of the UDF in Cape Town. For the rest of the 1980s the left counter-hegemony was structured as a Gramscian hegemonic alliance.

* An outburst of intellectual creativity after the 1976 Soweto Uprising manifested itself wider than just the progressive alternative press (Ravan staff, 1985:22). A mass outpouring of township-based popular culture accompanied the re-awakening of resistance. Further, an expanding leftist intelligentsia colonized many academic institutions in South Africa. (They succeeded, for example, in completely 'capturing' the University of the Western Cape by the end of the 1980s). The left-wing press was only one example of the subjective interventionism of the period.

* The growth of a progressive alternative press, from 1980 onwards, was thus a development which parallelled the emergence of a new 'popular-grassroots' genre of counter-hegemonic organization, and an intensification of the social struggle. It was a genre of media bearing striking similarities to 'popular communication' projects in other parts of the world, as described by Mattelart (1983); White (1980); and Dionisio (1986). These media did not cause the social struggle as certain conservative media analysts have suggested (see Schlesinger et al, 1983). As Tomaselli and Pinnock (1984) noted,

the leftist media are rather communicative adjuncts arising out of the complex dynamics that give rise to social conflict. This parallells the experiences of other Third World societies, for example: Nicaragua (Mattelart, 1986); Zimbabwe (see Frederikse, 1982); and Guinea-Bisau (see Cabral, 1980: 138-154).

* Pinnock and Tomaselli (1984:11), have also suggested that the shift to 'community struggle' and 'community journalism' was a tactical response to state repression; a phenomena Mattelart (1983, 1986) has identified elsewhere. Johnson also notes how the community genre of journalism was adopted because it was difficult for the state to stamp it out (Johnson, 1985:21). This genre aimed at promoting local community organization by being linked to a specific community or organization; remaining small; using a bottom-up approach; and consciously setting a limited political role for itself. In the process, of course, these developments gave rise to 'public spheres' on a micro scale.

* The white-owned media were unable to provide a systematic voice to either the growing leftist counter-hegemony and/or the working class communities in South Africa (Johnson, 1982:2.15). White (1982:10) examined a similar process in Latin America whereby lower-status views are excluded by the mainstream media. The resultant narrowed world-view was due to both the structural constraints imposed by market forces (Louw, 1984, 1990) and to media legislation. This necessitated the development of alternative channels of communication to serve this rapidly growing sector of the population. To some extent this development can be used as proof of the inadequacy of Frankfurt School pessimism: the South African

culture industry did not 'passify' and de-revolutionize the masses (although, of course, Marcuse's extension of the Frankfurt School tradition would easily be able to accommodate and explain the emergence of leftist resistance in South Africa. The explosion of resistance from the mid-1970s onwards can be used to justify the optimism of culturalists like Raymond Williams and E.P Thompson.

* A structural shift in the economy to industry (1960s to mid-1970s), meant that by the mid-1970s South Africa was primarily an urban-based industrialized society (Innes, 1984; and Gelb, 1991:159-160). South Africa was one of the peripheral regions in which MNC located its heavy industry (while the First World was restructured into an Information-driven economy). This industrialization of South Africa led to the growth of a significant black proletariat and to the rise of black trade unions. By the 1980s this proletarian community and its allies had acquired the skills and organizational forms to run a media which could voice its interests. The 'subjective' (media) struggle was thus, on the one hand, an outgrowth of the material context. But without the subjective interventionism of BC these material conditions might have come to naught. This interplay of objective and subjective conditions demonstrates the need for a 'totality' approach to analyzing this phenomenon.

* During the 1970s the liberal guild press had hired a few black journalists; a trend started by the Rand Daily Mail. Many of these black journalists soon found themselves in the same position as their left-wing white colleagues -- alienated by the conservative self-censorship of the guild press. Ironically then, the journalistic skills learned by these black journalists (together with skills made available by church and white leftist academics)

were able to provide the basic skills needed for the early progressive alternative media (Pinnock & Tomaselli, 1984:12). This shift of skills represents an interesting Enzensbergian twist. it also illustrates the value of utilizing all superstructural gaps as they become available. However, certainly at the outset, this narrow skills-base was, in one sense a weakness, because of the undue reliance that was placed on the shoulders of relatively few media activists (Johnson, 1982:2.31; and Patel, 1985:14; and Louw, 1989d).

* The establishment and running of left-wing presses was facilitated by the availability of funding from churches and human rights organizations. The availability of overseas funding (and 'moral' support) from foreign liberal and social democrat groups was a significant factor in the development of a South African left-wing press. Other leftists (eg. in Latin America) have been unable to rely on this factor to the same extent. This is, to some extent, due to the fact that 'apartheid' had become a highly emotive issue in Western Europe and America; an issue which anti-apartheid groups have been successful in capitalizing on. One of the ironies of the 1980s was therefore the extent to which the USA (largely due to pressure from the USA black caucus) eagerly sought to give funding to South African groups while fighting allied leftist groups elsewhere in the world. (As a result of the wider world picture, Leftists attached to the MDM, in general, shunned such USA advances in the 1980s. This appeared to cause tremendous irritation to USA officials). And because South Africa is so closely tied to Western interests, the South African government found it difficult to stop

the Western interest groups from providing such financial aid, although obstacles were created to slow the process down (Sinclair, 1990:42-43). To a considerable extent, these donations were motivated by a desire on the part of Western interests to gain a toe-hold into what they saw as potentially the future ruling hegemony in South Africa. Much of the funding was seemingly motivated by the belief that the West would be able to influence the direction of 'the struggle' by boosting those identified as the 'non-communist left' within this counter-hegemony. During the 1980s the South African Left became increasingly skillful at mobilizing such sources of funding (with all the duplicity and hidden agendas -- on both sides -- which that necessarily entailed). However, following the 1990 reforms the West came to see the reformed-Right as a credible hegemonic influence in South Africa. As a result, funding for the Left increasingly dried up.

* A significant development was the penetration of Information Age technology into South Africa during the early 1980s. This technology was easily accessible to undercapitalized communities in the form of PCs, Apple technology and desktop publishing and cheap high-quality photocopying facilities (Pinnock, 1991). Leftist media activists quickly learned to exploit the benefits and superstructural 'gaps' that the Information Age introduced into the South African context. The availability of desk top publishing technology reinforced two factors already present in South Africa which directed those in the counter-hegemony toward print media: (1) academics were often involved in the early stages of founding such ventures, and they have a 'natural' tendency toward opting for the printed word; and (2) the South African state blocked counter-

hegemonic access to the airways (eg. radio and television). Given the high levels of illiteracy amongst black South Africans, it was important for the state to grant itself a monopoly of broadcast access to these people. The state achieved this through internal licensing arrangements and 'jamming' of external broadcasts.

Popular resistance and the building of democratic media practices

The popular democratic phase of leftist struggle (or phase three) is of central importance because it was during this phase that all three main forms of internally-based left-wing press emerged. But most importantly, it was during this period that a popularist media (see Mattelart & Siegelaub, 1983) developed in South Africa in the form of the progressive alternative press. From a New Leftist perspective, especially one giving prominence to a Habermas/Mattelart (dialogical/ democratic) view of communication, it is this progressive alternative genre which deserves special attention.

The way communication flow is institutionalized in a community tells us much about democratic practice in that community. At the one extreme communication can be institutionalized in a top-down fashion (best exemplified by a militaristic-commanderist style). The communication associated with MNC is of this top-down genre. Firstly, the citizens of the First World are spoken 'down to' by their own culture industry. (Ironically the media of the Second World made the same mistake as a result of their 'top-down' vanguardist approach). Secondly, the First (North) World communicates 'down to' the Third (South) World. The other extreme is fully-functioning interactive dialogical communication as described by Habermas or Mattelart or White. This latter approach complements popular (ie. mass

participative) political practice.

Top-down communication is inherently undemocratic. It facilitates the manipulation of a population by a ruling elite because it is uni-directional. For the Frankfurt School, the 'culture industry' operated in this fashion. The top-down approach complements those political practices (such as populism) which do not encourage mass participation. The mainstream media in South Africa (the guild press, the state-run and commercial broadcasting stations) operate such uni-directional communication structures. This genre of communication was planted in South Africa during the British Imperial era. Hence it complements the rigid class-stratified society of British capitalism (Curran, 1988). In this way these media have served the interests of the minority (white) ruling class, and have in no way facilitated democratic debate in South Africa. The managers of these media, in fact, have shown little commitment to democratic practices.

The dialogical approach facilitates a bottom-up empowering of the community. Ironically, during the 1970s and 1980s, because of its need for rapid world-wide interactive communication, MNC produced communication systems able to facilitate mass-dialogical communication. This took the form of electronic-information technology. It was Enzensberger who pointed to the need for the Left to utilize this dialogical potential to empower the masses. In the dialogical approach the community can articulate its own interests in a democratic debate. The 1980s in South Africa saw the proliferation of this mode of community organization. Between 1976 and 1983 popular (grassroots) communication overtook and, for the most part, superceded the populist approach. Within the resultant structures of the MDM much emphasis was placed on popular democratic practices internal to organizations. The

resultant popular style of community organization of the 1980s provides salient lessons for communicologists.

The Grassroots media project in Cape Town represented the first attempt to institutionalize this popular-dialogical approach when it adopted an interactive-dialogical communication structure. In setting up and running Grassroots they seriously challenged mainstream (uni-directional) media theory and practice. This challenge is centrally important for this thesis because of the way the project demonstrates how a grassroots participative democracy can be built so as to potentially constitute the basis of a leftist 'public sphere'.

In top-down communication a one-way flow of information is paralleled by an inadequate knowledge of local conditions, or what the people themselves think, or want or do. The crux of the problem can be seen in the oft used simplistic positivist-functional Communicator-Medium-Recipient (C-M-R) model. This equation was inappropriately adapted by communication scholars from telecommunications modeling studies conducted by Bell Laboratories in the 1940s (Shannon and Weaver, 1949). The concept is a deterministic one which cannot describe situations where recipients resist, contest, reject or misunderstand the information imposed upon them. The model explains nothing outside the transmission of electric, electronic, frequency spectrums or bandwidth signals. Developed by a host of researchers like Gerbner (1956), Lasswell (1948), Newcomb (1953), Westley and MacLean (1957) and others, they unsuccessfully sought to lessen the model's essential determinism. The problem, however, started well before Shannon and Weaver's experiments, was caused by the emergence of mass production methods during the early years of the 20th Century, the consequent

development of a consumer society, and the need to sell products as fast as they were made. In communicological terms the result was the culture industry, as described by the Frankfurt School.

Prior to interference by ruling elites who wanted to control who could speak to whom, the potential existed for feedback (ie. democratic communication). For this to occur every person with a crystal radio transmitter could converse with all other transmitter/receiver owners. This capacity was systematically curtailed and then restricted in terms of military and commercial broadcasting imperatives during the 1920s (Hayman and Tomaselli, 1989). This restriction of communication between people using the new technology formed the basis of the modern communication and culture industries. Elites reserved themselves the right to speak to whom about what and how (see White, 1983a:4). They tried to turn recipients into passive consumers along the lines of the C-M-R model. C-M-R assumptions underpin the commercial and state media. A comparison of the media style of the commercial press and the progressive-alternative press illustrates two different approaches to community organization -- ie. 'top-down' (which may take on either an authoritarian or a 'populist' form) versus 'bottom-up' (popular form).

The left-wing press in South Africa during the 1980s went against the entire pattern of 'guild' media organization, as well as established journalistic practices. The top-down approach of the establishment media envisages a passive community, waiting for leaders or 'experts' to expound on what is best. This communicative form characterized the mainstream media in South Africa during the 1980s as well as the populist approach of, for example, Buthelezi's Inkatha. It is an approach that parallels the uni-directional understanding of communication which underpins the South African guild press, the SABC

and Inkatha's Ilanga newspaper. This media is ancillary to the view of community organization which aims to incorporate the 'underdeveloped' sector of the population into the 'developed' consumerist economy. This is an inherently undemocratic view of both community organization and communication. It is a view of communication which, in the South African context, has served to underpin the interests of racial-capitalism (apartheid).

The Guild Press, SABC and Ilanga has proved incapable of providing a voice to, or for, the huge left-wing constituency in the townships. It has also failed to tap into the enormous energy of popular cultural expression. This situation is not unique to South Africa (see Clarke, et al, 1979). This failure is typical of the top-down approach of organizing media. Failure to understand the interests of the community to be targeted results in failure to communicate. Hence, for example, an important motivation for starting progressive alternative presses was the perceived inability or 'unwillingness' of the white-owned media to provide a systematic voice to either this growing left-wing sector and/or working class communities in South Africa (Patel, 1985:13). The guild press failed for three main reasons: firstly, this was partly due to media legislation. A second cause was due to the fact that its mainly white middle class journalists were isolated from, and did not understand this (mainly township) sector. And thirdly, it was partly due to structural constraints imposed by capitalist market forces (Louw, 1984, 1990). The guild press is seen to be linked to external (MNC) interests which seek to impose their definition of social organization onto the community.

It is characteristic of the press under capitalism that 'serious

journalism' aimed at the non-affluent (eg. working class, lumpenproletariat, peasants, pensioners, etc) is eliminated by a combination of advertising pressures, and the fact that neither capital nor the state are prepared to subsidize this form of press (in the same way that they subsidize 'objective journalism' aimed at middle and upper class audiences). Advertisers will only use media that reach audiences which have the desire and money to purchase the products they are trying to promote. In other words, advertisers want to tap the disposable income of the middle classes. They put 'pressure' on the press to produce media which caters for the tastes of these middle classes. Any 'serious' media aiming at the working class -- even if such media has a large circulation -- runs into financial trouble because advertisers shy away from it. The elimination of a working class press due to market forces has been noted in Britain (Curran, 1978) and in France (Freiberg, 1981). Curran (1988:97) quotes the example of a national Daily Herald in Britain whose loss of advertising far exceeded its loss of circulation. This proved the more important cause of its downfall. The paper found it difficult to attract advertising because of its overwhelmingly working class readership (Curran, 1988:96). Curran (1988:97) lists several other newspapers which, despite substantial circulations, also folded because they appealed to working class readerships. An example of this process in South Africa was the Rand Daily Mail (Louw, 1984:33; Tomaselli et al, 1987:79-86).

This state of affairs is especially problematic in South Africa where it is the 'poor sectors' which constitute the overwhelming majority of the population. Not catering for these sectors, in the sense of including them into society's communication net, becomes, in

this context, profoundly anti-democratic. This marginalisation necessitated the development of alternative (bottom-up) channels of communication in the 1980s to serve the rapidly growing working class sector of the population. This South African development paralleled a similar growth in Latin American grassroots communication from the mid-1970s (see White, 1980, 1989). The resultant left-wing media had an 'organic link' to the populations they served and hence were able to be part of the process of that community's resistance to racial-capitalism. But such media, aiming at non-affluent readerships, have difficulty in surviving under capitalist conditions, unless an organization with huge resources -- trade union, political movement, church, etc -- is prepared to subsidize it. In a few countries with mixed economies -- Sweden, Holland, and Belgium -- the state fulfills this role (see Hulten, 1984). In South Africa, certain Churches (such as the South African Catholic Bishops Conference) provided finance. But this meant building a left-wing press on a foundation over which the left-wing had little control. There was thus always the risk that funding could be discontinued at any time (a risk that became apparent after the 1990 reforms).

The birth of alternative bottom-up communication channels in South Africa can be traced to the appearance of Grassroots in 1980.

Using the media to build popular democracy: the Grassroots experience.

Cape Town's Grassroots newspaper of the period 1980-1984 represents a key phenomenon in the development of the left-wing press. This newspaper demonstrated the potential of the media as a tool for popular 'superstructural' political activism in the Enzensbergian sense. More importantly, it demonstrated how media could be used to further

grassroots or popular democracy. In other words, the project moved a considerable way to demonstrating that Habermas' ideal of a (democratic-participative) public sphere was not necessarily utopian. The Grassroots project proved (especially during its early phase, 1980 to 1983) that the mass media need not only be conceived of as uni-directional top-down communication. Grassroots showed how the mass media could also be used to facilitate dialogical participative (and hence democratic) communication.

During the 1980s the subaltern groups in the Western Cape became active in their self-mobilization around the nodal points of the UDF and NEUM. These communities developed a style of popular (bottom-up) community organization. Taking the initiative themselves, they moved to shake off their passive acquiescence to domination at the end of the 1970s. An organic development was catalyzed which no top-down outside intervention could have achieved. Central to this development arose a new mode of (popular) communication and organization. Grassroots, was central to this self-learning and self-activation process.

Grassroots was set up in 1979 as the result of a WASA initiative and funding. The first issue appeared in early 1980. Although the original intention was to have a national distribution, Grassroots de facto became a largely Cape Town phenomenon, although it was distributed to other Western Cape areas as far afield as Worcester. (In the early stages it did have some national distribution). The first issue explained why WASA had decided to set up the paper under a headline "A paper for you that fills the void":

> This newsletter has been born out of the tremendous need for community organizations in the Western Cape. Civil and community news are increasingly being kept out of major newspapers...(and) we know that these newspapers have never really shown an interest or

> concern for civic and community matters, especially in areas where the disenfranchised live. When civic and community news items are highlighted, these are in most cases restricted to separate 'extra' editions. Even then preference is shown for sensational news or the activities of ethnic bodies working within separate development institutions ... we, therefore believe that a vacuum exists in the publication of community news and hope that Grassroots can to a certain extent fill the void.

At the outset, Cape Town's media activists knew of no model from which to work, so a 'trial and error' approach, together with 'evaluation workshops' was adopted. (Grassroots Internal Assessment paper, as quoted by Johnson, 1982:2.29). What transpired included elements that had already emerged in the work of other leftist theorists and practitioners. These included Enzensberger's views on praxis communication; a Eurocommunist concern at leftist-pluralism; Habermas' left-dialogical model; West European work on 'community media' projects; progressive church media (see Murphy, 1986); and especially the 'popular communication' models developed in Latin America (see Mattelart, 1980, 1983, 1986; and White, 1980, 1989). But South Africans were, by and large, cut off from these developments. The resultant lack of exposure to any theoretical or practical work on democratic leftist media left a void. Only trial and error could fill this, by, in may cases, 'reinventing the wheel'. What is interesting is the extent to which Grassroots workers did independently replicate so much of what had been done elsewhere. It was only after Grassroots had been publishing for some time that Michael Traber (see Traber, 1985) visited Cape Town and thereby introduced an awareness of popular-media as it had developed in Latin America.

The media activists at Grassroots placed an explicit emphasis on 'community news'. This marked a new development in South African journalism (Pinnock & Tomaselli, 1984:11). Grassroots developed from

the premise that community issues were central to its raison d'etre. From the very outset, community organizations were involved. In December 1978 WASA approached 50 community organizations, civics and worker groups in the Western Cape area to discuss the idea of starting such a newspaper. Only once endorsement was granted was the project set in motion during 1979. In so far as the Grassroots project began as a media activist initiative it conformed more closely to 'group communication' rather than 'peoples communication' as defined by White (1989:17-18). However, as the project developed it did, to some extent, mutate so as to straddle the two categories. From the outset the project was intentionally set up autonomously of WASA, and made accountable to a Board of Trustees drawn from the local community. This community involvement was further carried over into the actual running of Grassroots. The publication was, (at least up until police repression made this increasingly difficult), controlled by a Board of Trustees. This Board consisted of representatives of the endorsing organizations from the community. These Trustees -- comprised of representatives of community organizations, journalists and academics -- also constituted the Editorial Board of Grassroots.

Through this direct organic link to the organizations of the local community (after 1983 almost all affiliated to the UDF) Grassroots became de facto a part of the process of leftist resistance to apartheid. 'Progressive alternative' journalism hence became an important component (link) in the leftist counter-hegemonic network. It also helped to shape the direction the leftist struggle took. Grassroots hence became a seminal example of how the media can move beyond a mere supplier of information, and become a central component in the building of democratic-leftist counter-hegemonic organization.

(This genre slides easily into both the New Leftist and Habermasian organizational styles preferred in this thesis). Certainly, this is not to deny the important role Grassroots fulfilled as a supplier of information and an 'alternative' (leftist) analysis of South Africa. Important was its role in supplying information that left-community and worker organizations needed which the 'mainstream' media did not provide. This included information on community (and worker) news, views and aspirations; health; education; legal matters; and social services (such as transport and housing).

Grassroots, however, clearly went beyond information provision. It became a catalyst for: (1) the development of, at the 'psychological' level, a sense of (a Fanon-type) community 'unity'; and (2) the construction of, at the organizational level, a (local-tier) leftist counter-hegemony. It did this through providing a channel for the co-ordination of the various organizational initiatives (both community and worker). In this way Grassroots provided a practical illustration of hegemony-construction in Gramsci's and also in Poulantzas' senses. (In other words, it was superstructural labour to build alliances based upon a conception of a social diversity). Just as importantly, Grassroots became a catalyst for the development of skills within the community it served. Through this involvement it helped to stimulate and develop media and communication skills in the community. From both a culturalist and Mattelart perspective this inclusion is an important dimension of leftist hegemony building. But as significant has been the influence of the project on raising -- through hands-on exposure, and example -- general organizational skills within the Western Cape 'coloured' townships. (The fact that it remained restricted to

'coloured' areas -- ie. did not succeed in breaking into the 'black' townships -- was considered a problem by the Grassroots media activists). Important with regard to skills development was the example set by the very structuring of the Grassroots project itself. This provided a practical example, and pool of skills, of how to build democratic leftist organization. For example:

* Control of the project by a Board of Trustees, which consisted of representatives of the community, set an important precedent for democratic community organization and control of projects.
* The managing committee, or executive, was elected at an annual general meeting, at least until police repression, under the States of Emergency, severely curtailed these procedures. These AGMs had comprised representatives of the community and worker organizations. Between 1985 and 1989 these were progressively decimated by police repressive measures. The executive committee was where decision making -- eg. over policy, finance, etc -- was primarily centred. During the repressive period the executive found itself taking on more and more of the functions previously (democratically) delegated to other sectors of the project.
* The executive was, in terms of the original 'ideal' model, made accountable to the general body. Members of this GB were, in turn, answerable to their (democratically constituted) organizations. At the start of the project this GB met every five weeks: ie. just after the publication of the previous Grassroots (Grassroots being produced every five-weeks). This GB decided what would appear in the next issue of the newspaper, with lists of stories for the next issue being discussed and approved. The GB also allocated to sub-groups the task of collecting the stories which had been approved for the up-

coming edition. However, as repression mounted between 1985 and 1989 so these structures of accountability increasingly crumbled. The executive assumed more and more of the responsibilities set out above, which in a sense 'corrupted' the original project. This was a matter of grave concern to those on the executive.

* No-one could remain editor of Grassroots for more than two years, following which such a person had to step down. This served to prevent the 'reification' of 'leadership' roles, and ensure the spread of skills.
* They tried to avoid the concentration of skills, and hence 'technocratic' power in the hands of a few 'experts'. Instead, the very running of the production process was deliberately 'opened up' as far as possible through the creation of News-gathering and Production committees. This 'opening up' process represented an especially important feature of the project; because it served to demonstrate how a Habermasian left-democratic community can be organized by using the media as a catalyst.
* The news-gathering committee was responsible for collecting and writing the stories which the GB had decided upon, and for 'checking up' on this collection process. This committee thereby encouraged maximal grassroots participation from those involved in the process of news production. (The news-gathering committee was assisted by an Advisory Committee; a committee of 'experts' who could help with legal matters, and stories on labour matters, health, etc.). Such grassroots-community participation precisely facilitated the creation of an active popular culture. It represented a community-hands-on process which served to help generate the sort of self-worth Fanon

(1968) called for; the de-alienation Marx (1981) demanded; and the re-activation of the dialectic Marcuse (1968) desired.

* The Production committee came into operation on printing day. It consisted of up to 50 representatives from community and worker organizations. They helped to actually produce the newspaper (fold, collate, stack, etc.). In this way the participating organizations came to feel that the product 'belonged' to them (important from both a Fanon and Mattelart point of view). It was also a way of cutting production costs.
* The distribution of Grassroots was designed at the outset to help strengthen counter-hegemonic 'bonding'. This process was undertaken by a permanent distribution official together with a group of volunteers. They distributed door-to-door and used the opportunity to make face-to-face contact with the community. In this way they assisted in the process of generating a (Habermas-type) social dialogue and (Fanon-type) 'mobilization'. The distributors were also encouraged to try and ascertain the reaction of the readers to the previous issue. This was done to create a 'feedback' mechanism which could serve as an important source of critique, so that improvements -- and responsiveness to the community -- could be made. However, under the States of Emergency, this process was hard hit (by, for example, the widespread detention of distributors). As a result, between 1985 and 1989 this ideal pattern was superceded by distribution via selected 'drops' and 'pick-ups'.

Grassroots pioneered a new style of print journalism in South Africa which became a model for other progressive-alternative publications. It was a style that paralleled, in many ways, the genre of broadcast

journalism that emerged in Latin America in the 1970s (see White, 1983a:6-8). Grassroots also influenced various aspects of the other forms of left-wing publications. This 'style' has become influential because it was helpful in mobilizing a left-democratic counter-hegemony; a Grassroots training programme served to spread this genre of journalism throughout the Western and Southern Cape; and the production by 'Grassroots Publications' of the "We Speak for Ourselves" training booklets helped to spread this genre even wider. The Grassroots collective was, in fact, probably at its most successful in its role of catalyst. The actual nature of this 'Grassroots' journalistic 'style' will be examined in this chapter when the 'theory' of 'progressive-alternative' media activism is discussed.

The changes to the Grassroots project due to state repression

A crack-down on Grassroots activists began following the declaration of a State of Emergency in July 1985 which initially covered only certain areas (including Cape Town). Grassroots was, in fact, one of the first organizations to be hit by Right-wing repression. This was presumably because, as a communication medium, it was highly visible. Also in terms of state strategy (Louw & Tomaselli, 1989:38-9) the media were believed to be central to the 'total onslaught'. The year 1985 was, in fact, one of the hardest times for Grassroots. The repression took the form of banning key activists, continual raids and harassment and even direct attacks such as the burning down of the Grassroots offices. The state took particular pains to detain those who distributed Grassroots in the community. Further, between 1986 and 1989, ever-tightening media regulations became a key feature of each successive State of Emergency. The result was a form of

'administrative repression' -- media activists, including those left on Grassroots, were forced to 'police' themselves. Those working on left-wing publications like Grassroots and the Weekly Mail pushed as far as they could against the limits of the media regulations (unlike the guild press which simply acquiesced in the face of state pressures. In fact they often even went further than state restrictions required of them). However, less and less was legally printable, between 1985 and 1989, as the struggle intensified (Tomaselli, R. 1987, 1988). All this seriously altered the operating climate for the worse. And from July 1985 onwards the original democratic Grassroots model could no longer operate.

By the end of 1985 the popular democratic communication model, described above, had collapsed. By October 1985 only 3 people connected with Grassroots itself were not in detention. In the face of state action they took to avoiding the Grassroots offices. Instead, they held their meetings in a car. There could be no question of consulting with the community under these conditions. As with so many other parts of the leftist counter-hegemony around the country, the (democratic) communication networks painstakingly constructed in the first half of the 1980s ceased operation. All that was left to do was to try and survive and, in the case of Grassroots, try and get out some form of newsletter.

The State of Emergency brought about six significant changes to the Grassroots model.

Firstly, the most serious effect was that the GB stopped functioning. Hence the democratic popularist ideal of community involvement and of project accountability to the community was lost. It simply became impossible to put 100 representatives together in one

room without attracting Security Police action. Further, the leftist organizations which had previously sent representatives to the GBs were themselves devastated by the detentions and bannings of their key activists. Every leftist organization was in crisis. Its primary concern became its own survival and merely trying to continue its own work with fewer and fewer people available. As the State of Emergency bit deeper daily, more and more effort had to be put into avoiding detection and detention. As a result, the remaining activists were compelled to withdraw from all but their own sector-specific activities. Attending a Grassroots GB simply no longer featured very highly on their list of priorities. The result was that the Grassroots executive was cut loose from the very body set up to democratically control their activities and make them accountable to the community.

Secondly, with the collapse of the GB, the executive committee henceforth became, by default, the heart of the Grassroots operation. So state repression had ironically forced Grassroots to operate like the Right-wing state itself -- in an undemocratic fashion. The executive tried to keep contact with the community, worker and student organizations in their area. However, this contact was no longer formal. The formal democratic structure representing community control of the project was lost and replaced by ad hoc and rather random consultation. Accountability was necessarily watered down as the executive committee ended up with all the responsibility in its lap.

Thirdly, the production practices changed. In a sense, Grassroots went full circle. It had started in 1980 as a small project run by a handful of people. Between 1982 and 1983 it developed into a large operation involving hundreds of community representatives. After the

formation of the UDF this direct community-representation declined as activists concentrated on their sector-specific work, and hence had less time to be concerned with Grassroots. With the repression the numbers shrank once more. Between 1986 and 1989 Grassroots became a media activist project rather than a media project run by community representatives. With the GB effectively inoperative the executive had no choice but to turn to their own resources for writing and producing Grassroots and the newsletter became the responsibility of a mere 9 media activists. However, they did succeed in involving some students to help them with the production processes. The newsletter itself was effectively put out by only one co-ordinator, with the help of a few volunteers. And although these volunteers came from leftist organizations in the area, they were no longer mandated representatives of these organizations.

Fourthly, Grassroots was seriously crippled by 'administrative repression'. Ever tightening media regulations made it illegal to publish what the government deemed 'subversive'. Virtually everything the leftist Grassroots' constituency wanted to read about fell into this category. The brilliance of the state's media regulations was that they placed the onus of censorship onto media workers themselves. The state did not have to place a censor in every newsroom. Instead, it merely randomly checked publications. If the regulations were transgressed, then the medium could be shut down, and the media worker/s fined or detained. As a result media activists had to administer their own repression. And they were compelled to waste a great deal of time checking with lawyers just how far they could go. This also meant it took longer to produce a newsletter. However, in the process, those at Grassroots learned to be highly creative in

circumventing media restrictions. So, for example, instead of publicizing the views of leftists opposed to 'puppet elections' (which was illegal), they instead interviewed candidates who were standing for the House of Representatives (the 'coloured' section of the apartheid-Tricameral Parliament). In this way they got the candidates to show themselves up as 'low calibre' or 'sellouts' in the eyes of readers.

Fifthly, it became impossible for those at Grassroots to make any long term plans because no-one knew what the state's next move was going to be. This became highly disruptive. Amongst media activists (and in fact, activists generally), the result was the growth of a 'culture' of short term thinking. (This attitude became problematic for ANC organization after 1990). More generally, an air of uncertainty, resulted in a great deal of wasted energy. Activists would spend many hours strategising to counter a move they thought the state was about to make. But nothing would happen, and the energy expended would be wasted.

In the sixth place, during 1985 and 1986 the original distribution system collapsed. This caused a financial headache for Grassroots, because they could not sell their product. Instead, a series of drop-off points was instituted (such as mosques, churches, shops, etc) where people could simply pick up a copy. This necessitated an even greater reliance on donors. It also meant Grassroots lost touch with who was reading their product, and what their readers thought about Grassroots. In other words, the original 'public sphere' notion was lost. Because it had become a case of dumping piles of Grassroots and leaving the scene quickly, they could not ascertain if this distribution method was really effective. To compensate for their lack of readership

information, they pushed up their print run from 20 000 to 40 000. This was done to try and ensure that the target community still received information, even in the face of the Emergency clampdown.

Eventually, however, as people got 'used to' the State of Emergency, the participative method of distribution did return to some extent. By 1989 community organizations were once again taking responsibility for distributing some copies of Grassroots door-to-door in some areas. However, this distributive activity varied geographically and issue to issue. But Grassroots was unable to rebuild the community-newsletter model during the second half of the 1980s. Further, the development of South had significantly impacted on the functioning of Grassroots. Grassroots was no longer acting as the primary source of left-wing 'news'. Instead, the left-commercial weekly South had taken on that role in the Western Cape. By 1989 it was clear that the Grassroots newsletter project was in serious trouble. The last edition of Grassroots was, in fact, published during the 1989 Defiance Campaign at the request of the MDM. An era was over.

Despite the problems, however, it must be noted that the Grassroots project had kept growing. Hence, 1980 had seen 6 editions of the newsletter produced. This went up to 9 in 1981. After 1982 Grassroots appeared on the streets 10 times a year. By 1989, despite the worst that the state could throw at the Grassroots media activists, the project had grown into a five-pronged operation:

* the Grassroots 'newsletter' itself (last published in 1989);
* the "Learning Roots" sub-project (which began in 1985);
* the "New Era" 'magazine' (which began in 1986);
* an education and training division; and
* a rural organizing division. This latter sub-project involved a team

traveling around the Cape rural areas, training media activists. The Saamstaan newsletter was an outgrowth of these efforts.

During the second half of the 1980s the Grassroots model was, in fact, exported to at least one new area of South Africa, namely the Karoo and the Southern Cape. There, as a result of a Grassroots rural education project, a new community newsletter called Saamstaan was born in 1984. Saamstaan was closely modelled on the Grassroots genre.

Despite years of state repression, Grassroots succeeded in pioneering and establishing a new style of journalism in South Africa -- a style that complemented the (phase three) popular model of community mobilization and organization. The Grassroots collective has probably been most successful as a catalyst. They assisted the formation of other publications like Ukusa (Durban), Saamstaan (Oudtshoorn), The Eye (Pretoria), Iswe Lase Rini (Grahamstown), and South (Cape Town). Even those left-wing media without any direct links to Grassroots (especially the social democrat genre) have not been unaffected by this progressive-alternative project. Its influence has been discernible in all the left-wing publications and left-wing news agencies which emerged from 1985 to 1989. The popular communication 'ideal' and the brief years during which it worked, set an important precedent upon which to build a left-democratic media policy. It demonstrated that the notion of creating a participative (democratic) mass media is not merely a utopian ideal. It is this fact that makes the Grassroots experience of 1980 to 1983 of central importance to this thesis' considerations on a New Leftist communicology.

The 'Grassroots model' is now located in the 'collective memory' of left-wing media activists across the country. It is a model of

communication that is likely to have an important influence on South Africa's future media structuring if the left has its way.

The shift from community newsletters to Left-Commercial newspapers -- the example of South

State repression was not the only serious challenge faced by left-wing media activists in the second half of the 1980s. Throughout (even the second half of the decade, when the State of Emergency had inflicted massive damage to left-wing infrastructures), left-wing political grassroots action kept proliferating, especially after the formation of the UDF in 1983. A key factor in the success of the UDF was that it succeeded in harnessing the popular energies of grassroots community struggles. In a sense the UDF utilized a 'culturalist' interpretation of leftist practice (not unlike the Solidarity Movement in Poland). The UDF was a form of leftist organization that represented the very antithesis of (centralized) Leninist-vanguardist mobilization (despite accusations of 'cabalism' -- see New African, Vol 2 No 48, 1990 1 and 7 -- in some quarters). The UDF used what White (1989) has called a 'networking' approach. It was this reliance on a 'bottom-up' popular-culture and grassroots activism that, in many ways, accounted for the eclecticism found in South African leftist practice during the 1980s. A top-down' (vanguardist) approach would no doubt have been more theoretically 'coherent' (uni-directional). For this reason it would have been easier for the Right to get to grips with and destroy. It was the eclectic-democratic approach of the UDF that proved un-monitorable and hence indestructible. Because it was based on multiple little grassroots 'public spheres' it was in effect 'multi-sourced' and 'multi-directional'. This was the source of the popular

struggle's immense unstoppable energy during the 1980s.

This proliferation made the Grassroots model of information distribution inadequate to cope with the level of activity. Whereas the Grassroots project was initially valuable for mobilizing left-wing practices and structures (Louw, 1989:30), by the mid-1980s the mobilization process had acquired a dynamic of its own. Further, after the formation of the UDF, activists previously involved with the Grassroots project moved off into other areas of work. This was one of the reasons that the Grassroots' GB stopped functioning, and the popular-communication organizational-model withered. If before 1983 Grassroots had been an important learning ground in the Cape where activists could acquire the skills of mass democratic work, after 1983 the conditions were irrevocably altered. The original importance of the Grassroots project as a means of diffusing the principles and practices of mass participative community democracy hence faded.

As the left constituency grew, so greater and greater volumes of leftist "news" was generated. It was news the guild press and SABC simply ignored. The six-weekly production cycle of Grassroots could not cope with the pace of events. It was a problem that would have arisen even if the state had not been engaged in repression targeted at Grassroots itself. In short, there was a gap in the South African communication infrastructure. A need existed for someone to give more frequent coverage to the proliferating left-wing news.

As a result of these perceived shortfalls, in 1984 Cape Town's media activists held a series of discussions. The result was the decision to try a new communication project -- a left-wing newspaper that would neither operate like the progressive alternative genre, nor like the guild press. The new newspaper would be a hybrid of the two

approaches. The result of these discussions was Cape Town's South. Similar hybrid left-commercial newspapers were established in two other South African centres, namely, Johannesburg (New Nation in 1986) and Durban (New African in 1989). From 1987 onwards, the Durban-based Catholic missionary newspaper UmAfrika transformed itself into this genre as well. This followed the recommendations of a research proposal to move in this direction (CCSU, 1986). For the purposes of this thesis an examination of South will serve to illustrate the left-commercial genre as a whole.

With South taking over the news function, media activists reasoned that Grassroots could shift its function so that the two left-wing media in Cape Town would complement each other. They would opt for different, but complementary roles, with Grassroots shifting its attention to printing features which 'filled in' the information which South did not cover. Grassroots would also turn to more educative work, covering, for example, advice on health and nutrition. In a sense, the paln was that Grassroots would revert to "grassroots" community issues (as opposed to 'news' and 'politics'). It was, however, a model that those at Grassroots never successfully implemented before the last issue came out in 1989.

The creation of the left-commercial newspapers facilitated the move from 'group communication' to grassroots 'networking' (White, 1989). The second half of the 1980s, in fact, saw the development of a multi-faceted communication infrastructure consisting of three 'levels': Firstly, a news-production wing, consisting of the left-commercial press and the 'alternative' news-agencies. This paralleled the Latin American experience of 'networking' groups into national and

international communication exchange systems (White, 1989:19). Secondly, a 'peoples communication' or 'public sphere' level (eg. Grassroots and Saamstaan, as well as the multitudes of grassroots groups who activated themselves in local struggles against apartheid infrastructures, using issues like housing, rents, evictions, unemployment, education, etc. This paralleled the Latin American experience described by White (1989:18-20). Thirdly, Media Resource Centres (MRC, 1989) and Media Training Groups like The Other Press Service (TOPS) and Durban Media Trainers Group (DMTG) (DMTG, 1990) provided media resources and skills training to community and workers groups on request. This parallels the development in Latin America described by White (1989: 18).

From the start South was not seen as a popularist community medium. In other words, it was never intended as a 'public sphere' or as 'peoples communication'. (For this reason this press genre is less useful than say Grassroots as a model for those developing a macro 'public sphere'/popular communication infrastructure for South Africa). Rather, from the outset South was envisaged as a left-commercial newspaper'. The intention was that South should become an economically self-sufficient as soon as possible. In other words, with the left-commercial genre, advertising and economic independence was seen as important. None of the left-commercial press had achieved this goal in 1991. In fact, this genre faced the real prospect of closure before the mid-1990s because its financial affairs are so unsound -- New African, for example relied on overseas funding for 92% of its running costs (Ntshakala & Emdon, 1991). This press was, in general, been the least successful of all the left wing presses when measured against its own founding-expectations. With the increasing threat of the phasing out

of overseas grants following the 1990 reforms, the failure to become self-sufficient became a real threat to the continued existence of this genre of press.

The mere intention to opt for a commercialism was in stark contrast to the Grassroots model. Hence from the outset South's staff included a full-time employee responsible for advertising. Furthermore, the advertising policy adopted was apolitical. Any advertisement would be accepted. So although South defined itself as a left-wing newspaper it would, for example, accept advertisements from a large company even while that company was engaged in a labour dispute with the constituency supporting South. This represented a complete change away from the advertising policy of progressive alternative media like Grassroots. In other words, it represented a radical shift towards pragmatic thinking amongst leftist media activists.

Although South was not seen as a community newspaper, it was still seen as left-wing. It saw itself as organically connected to the leftist struggle, and aimed to promote the expansion of leftist ideals in the community (albeit in a more top-down (populist?) rhetorical fashion). Further, it was decided that the internal operations of South would be structured in a democratic fashion. This meant that as a media genre South fell between the progressive alternative genre and the guild press. By trying to hybridize these two genres, the left-commercial press failed to realize the potential of either the libertarian or progressive media models. Trying to run South as a democracy meant that the newsroom was non-hierarchically ordered: the entire newspaper staff had a say in editorial decisions. In addition there was a monthly staff meeting to discuss broader policy matters.

However, as with the New African, on-going problems concerning the implementation of such democratic organizing principles were rife (see Ntshakala & Emdon, 1991).

The 'Grassroots model' of printing and distribution was completely dispensed with at South. A fully commercial operation was accepted as the only workable option. South contracted out to commercial printers and distributors. As with some other left-wing newspapers (ie. New Nation, New African, UmAfrika, Weekly Mail, and Vrye Weekblad), South found that they had to rely on Allied distributors because they have the largest distribution network in the country. It was simply not economically feasible to establish their own network. But this meant relying on a distribution company tied to South Africa's biggest newspaper group (ie. Argus Holdings). Such a company had no vested interest in helping the left-wing press to sell more copies. In fact, the more copies the left-wing press sold, the more this bit into sales of the English conservative-liberal press. This is a problem for which the left-wing press had no solution.

South developed an urban readership, with most copies being sold in Cape Town. Although originally intended to serve the whole Western Cape, South failed to make any real penetration of the rural areas around Cape Town. Further, South, never attracted the numbers originally expected. The first few issues sold well, but then a rapid decline set in and, at one point, sales dropped to 6000. (The New African experienced similar problems). This led to soul searching on the part of the media activists involved. The left-commercial genre failed to develop the strong points of either the progressive-alternative or the guild presses. It had neither the 'community-connectedness' of a Grassroots-type 'public sphere'; nor could it

compete with the efficiency of the guild press' resources and news-gathering capacity. Rather, the left-commercial genre inherited the weakness of both genres, without the strengths.

South workers therefore began asking themselves -- should a commercial-leftist newspaper be popular or political? In order to try and answer this question South conducted a readership survey in 1988. The survey showed that 'politics' was low on the list of what readers wanted, especially in the 'coloured' areas. There was 80% support for the UDF in the black areas, and a concomitant interest in 'politics'. But in Mitchells Plain the UDF only registered 20% support; the Labour Party registered 2% support; while 78% said they were not interested in politics. The South workers concluded that this showed a need to re-orientate away from 'politics' and towards a more 'entertainment' approach. As a result, in 1989 large doses of sports, arts and culture were included in South with the creation of an entertainment section called "Southside". Simultaneously the percentage of politics was reduced. A media activist said at the time, "We're going to give the people what they want." This shift towards trying to attract young upwardly mobile 'coloureds' seemed to work because sales went up to 20 000 in 1990. However, a readership survey in 1991 exposed an anomaly: the new readers were mostly working class from the black townships and not the 'yuppies' thought to be reading South. Further, South (like the other left-commercial) press faced another problem: it did not have the financial resources to compete with the guild press operating in its area (eg. The Argus) in trying to produce a mass-popular newspaper. Neither does this press have sufficient levels of managerial expertise (see Ntshakala & Emdon, 1991).

Further, in re-orienting itself towards a more commercial approach, South faced a staffing problem. Working at such a left-commercial newspaper did not generate a sense of being a media activist. The feeling of 'organic connectedness' to the wider community was lost. Instead of being a media activist one became a media worker. Such people felt intuitively they were no longer helping to build a 'public sphere' in the way progressive alternative press activists were. Hence, working at a left-commercial newspaper produced the same sense of alienation from one's product and from the community as a leftist felt while working for the guild press. Many felt that if they were going to work on a commercial newspaper then they might as well go where they could earn the highest possible salary. South could pay only half what the guild press paid its journalists. Further, South could not guarantee that it would be able to afford salary increases to match inflation. The result was staff demoralization and an attrition of staff to the guild press (a reversal of the late 1970s/early 1980s trend). This problem was exacerbated by the state's repression between 1985 and 1989. This served to demoralize the staff even further. Since 1990 the demoralization has come from a different source, namely, the threat by overseas funders to withdraw support. (Most of the funding for the left-commercial newspapers came from European Economic Community (ECC) sources. This source was curtailed in 1991, and due to end entirely in March 1992). Because the left-commercial press failed to develop effective management and advertising bases, a total withdrawal of overseas funding would be catastrophic (see Ntshakala & Emdon, 1991).

On top of these problems, state repression up to February 1990 made both printers and distributors nervous. Hence, even a company as large

as the Argus Company would not print a South edition with Mandela's photograph in it (while he was still a prisoner), for fear of upsetting the state.

In spite of these problems newspapers like South survived for some years. In the process they provided an invaluable learning ground where leftists could learn the skills of running the sort of large scale (self-financing) newspapers which a post-apartheid South Africa will demand. At the same time they filled an important niche in South Africa's information network. They drew attention to the fact that left-wing news exists. The degree to which the guild press began (since the late 1980s) to cover leftist news is, in part, attributable to the fact that the left-commercial and social democrat presses put this sort of news onto the wider social agenda.

The formation of a social democrat press -- the example of the Weekly Mail

The Weekly Mail is often lumped into the category of 'alternative press' together with the likes of Grassroots and South. If, however, one examines the Weekly Mail it becomes clear that, whereas the progressive-alternative press and the left-commercial press have much in common viz-a-viz their political alignment and even regarding aspects of their journalistic practice, the Weekly Mail is different. Weekly Mail is part of the South African left-wing press. However, it (together with the Vrye Weekblad) constitutes a sub-genre on its own. This is not really surprising given that a different contextual dynamic gave birth to the Weekly Mail. The other left-wing presses were the outgrowth of initiatives of the suppressed subaltern groups themselves. From the outset these other newspapers saw themselves as 'organically

connected' to the (black) masses being suppressed by apartheid. The same is not true of Weekly Mail. Weekly Mail arose out of a different set of circumstances. It emerged from the closure of the Rand Daily Mail in 1985 (Mervis, 1989: 524-535). When the Rand Daily Mail was closed the left-wing journalists working there found themselves de facto unemployable in South Africa because the rest of the guild press, being conservative, saw them as "a bunch of political activists" (Mervis, 1989:522). Following the Vaal uprising in 1984 the white establishment was very 'jumpy'. Hence, fifth columnist ('white leftists') were no longer welcome. Weekly Mail was a part of the same general 1980s political ferment in South Africa which led to the establishment of the other left-wing papers. It was clear that if these former Rand Daily Mail left-leaning staffers wanted to work again as journalists they would have to start their own newspaper. They did this by forming WM Publications in 1985. The editorial in the first edition of the Weekly Mail set the tone for this new press genre:

> The Weekly Mail is not just another newspaper. Consider how it was started. Not by businessmen more interested in the accounts than the news. Not by a political party wanting a mouthpiece for its views. It was started by a group of journalists put on the streets by the closures of the Rand Daily Mail and the Sunday Express. ... We also felt that it was time we made sure that our journalism was no longer dictated by interests outside journalism. We are tired of being at their mercy. It was time to have a newspaper created, controlled and owned by journalists.

From the very formation of WM Publications -- the controlling company of the Weekly Mail -- the structures and practices were stamped with the uniqueness of a new South African press genre. From the outset the Weekly Mail represented a hybrid of left-wing and liberal practices, both journalistically and organizationally. WM Publications is a registered commercial company. However, it is strongly influenced leftist principles. Hence the shareholders in WM Publications are

divided into two categories. Firstly, those who have bought shares in WM Publications but who are NOT working journalists on the Weekly Mail are excluded from voting rights over policy decisions. In this way owners of capital are not given any control over editorial policy matters. Such policy is the reserve of Weekly Mail editorial staff only. This policy registers something of a Frankfurt School-type concern with the process by which capital seems ultimately able to co-opt oppositional ventures into the 'culture industry'. A second category of share is those reserved for Weekly Mail staff. These latter are 'voting shares'. The number of shares anyone has depends on the length of service s/he has on the Weekly Mail. As the Weekly Mail staff has grown so the number of voting shares have grown, and in this way the voting rights of the original staffers has declined in proportion to overall policy control. In this way policy decision-making is democratized and given to the workers themselves on the Weekly Mail.

When it came to building an internal working structure the Weekly Mail also adopted a hybrid of leftist and libertarian practices. Hence management and editorial functions were strictly separated in accordance with libertarian principles. However, full democratic participation of the staff in editorial decision-making was encouraged. Internally the company was structured as non-hierarchically as possible. Line-functions (eg. an editor, business manager etc) existed, but all staff were paid the same (commercially unfavourable) salary, and all were part of a democratically-structured policy forming process. Staff meetings, where policy is thrashed out, take place twice a week. The staffers (32 in 1989) also have 2 representatives on the

Board of Directors. Any staffer can raise an item for discussion at Board level. Further, the Weekly Mail has a policy of equitable salaries -- staff are paid in accordance with length of service, so that a receptionist and editor starting work on the same day will receive the same salary. However, a functional pecking order was established for quick decision-taking on a day-to-day basis.

Although leftist, the Weekly Mail never saw itself as 'organically connected' to the MDM in the way the progressive alternative or left-commercial presses did. (Because of this 'connectedness' these other two press genres were often referred to colloquially as the 'comrade press'). Rather, from the outset the Weekly Mail stressed its independence. Those working on Weekly Mail defined themselves as anti-apartheid and left-wing, in fact, journalists working for the paper (and Vrye Weekblad) were often members of MDM-affiliates (the liberal press banned its staffers from joining these. However, this press refused to 'consult' with left political movements or affiliates regarding 'appropriate' editorial content. Further, the Weekly Mail saw its right to criticize both the apartheid state and left-wing mistakes as sacrosant. An 'internal' criticism of the left-wing was seen as healthy. It was a position which inevitably produced some tension on occasion between the Weekly Mail and left-wing activists. During the 1980s some of them called for the Weekly Mail to be made 'accountable' to MDM structures. That the Weekly Mail successfully resisted these pressures during the counter- hegemony phase has created a tradition of independent leftist journalism. This may prove a valuable legacy when a South African left hegemonic media is constructed. Such an approach complements any New Leftist media policy based upon either Poulantzas' or Habermas' principles. This legacy of

independent leftist journalism seems the best guarantee against sliding into a (left) media infrastructure that is a closed circuit of self-affirming, unchallenging and unchallenged ideas. This was the sort of sycophantic media that brought such discredit upon leftist praxis in Eastern Europe.

Weekly Mail has, to a large extent, invented its own style. However, there does seem to have been some influence on the Weekly Mail style of the sort of quality social-democrat journalism found on the British Guardian newspaper. Anton Harber, co-editor of the Weekly Mail described his aim (in mid 1989) as to produce: a good quality newspaper based upon good writing, accuracy and in-depth analytical reporting, but with an explanatory approach in which the context to the story is always given. He said: "What we have always refused to do is to feed a line to our readers", and he added, "the MDM has now come to see the value this policy has for the South African struggle".

Journalistically, Weekly Mail worked creatively within the State of Emergency context. A co-editor of the Weekly Mail, in fact, commented that "the State of Emergency gave us our journalistic gap." The Emergencies certainly reduced the flow of information within the country to a mere trickle after 1986. The guild press totally backed down in the face of state threats, and generally 'over-interpreting' the media regulations in a way that did little credit to South African journalism. (The Natal Witness was one of the few exceptions to this general rule). Professionals inside the country felt especially cut off from facts about what was happening. The Weekly Mail filled their need for information. In the process it attracted a very up-market highly educated readership. It is, however, a very 'narrow' readership

base (of 25 000) based primarily in Johannesburg and Cape Town. For this reason it proved unable to sustain a larger publication such as the Johannesburg-daily, the Daily Mail. The 1990 attempt by the WM-group to establish the Daily Mail, in fact, only served to financially cripple the Weekly Mail itself. This ultimately served to push the WM-group into negotiations with Argus Holdings for a 'take-over' which 'guaranteed' Weekly Mail editorial independence.

The Weekly Mail pushed the Emergency media regulations to their limits, using legal methods to fight state pressure. A pattern developed: the Weekly Mail spearheaded the resistance to state media restrictions. They would test the waters, and if challenged would go to court. In this way they often (but not always) succeeded in pushing the media regulations backward, winning a small additional journalistic space. Not surprisingly, a 1987 CCSU survey (conducted by this author) of editors, news editors and chief-sub-editors found that all those interviewed on the guild press (both English and Afrikaans) read the Weekly Mail. All admired the Weekly Mail for its 'guts' in fighting for 'journalistic space', even if they disagreed with its politics. This has given the Weekly Mail an influence well beyond its actual readership. In fact, the Weekly Mail seems to have been instrumental in putting much left-wing news onto the guild press agenda due to a 'copy-catism' (in which guild press journalists have followed the Weekly Mail's lead in covering certain types of leftist news. Their ability to do this has also grown apace. In 1985 the Weekly Mail was a small, understaffed shoe-string operation. As a result it had to use whatever freelance copy was available. However, as the paper grew, and its costing-structure improved so it was able to increase its staffing complement. The result was that within four years the Weekly Mail

could afford to internally generate its own investigative reporting, and had money available to spend on tracking down stories.

Weekly Mail has been very much a pioneer in South African left-wing journalism in creating a commercially viable leftist-press. Management explicitly avoided becoming dependent on foreign or church subsidies -- again stressing their policy of independence. This policy bore fruit in the form of a degree of security, at least up until the Daily Mail debacle which left the Weekly Mail with a large printing-debt owing to Caxtons (an Argus Holdings subsidiary). The attempt to establish a daily newspaper seriously damaged the Weekly Mail's finances. When the Daily Mail closed the Weekly Mail was forced into a 'debt management' relationship with Caxtons. As a result, from September 1990 to April 1991 the Weekly Mail lost a degree of its much cherished independence to an Argus-owned company. Although the Weekly Mail regained its independence once the Caxtons' debt was paid, WM Publications remain in a seriously weakened financial condition and will probably only become profitable once more from 1992. The additional equipment and staff brought into WM Publications by the Daily Mail venture means the Weekly Mail is no longer under-resourced. However, it has simultaneously placed a great debt-burden onto the Weekly Mail.

Some outside funding found its way into WM Publications. However, this funding was not used for direct running costs, but for the training of new journalists. This sponsorship was channeled into the 'S.A. Newspaper Education Trust'. Although not used to fund the running of the newspaper, this Trust has, of course assisted the Weekly Mail in the form of providing some funds to pay the new and inexperienced staff in both editorial and administrative positions.

Weekly Mail put much energy into attracting advertising, and employs an advertising director and two representatives. The Weekly Mail also did a lot of research into its readership profile. The results were collated into a presentation-package marketed to advertising agencies. The paper also acquired an ABC certificate in order to convince the advertising agencies to take them seriously. In 1990 the Weekly Mail attracted enough advertising to achieve a 30%-70% (advertisements-copy) ratio. Although most South African commercial tabloids work on a 50%-50% ratio (and the broadsheets on a 60%-40% ratio), the Weekly Mail attained financial viability on the 30-70% ratio. This makes it less dependent on advertisements than the establishment press. A key means of achieving this highly favourable costing-ratio has been through a creative use of Desk-top Publishing (DTP). The Weekly Mail's DTP-system makes it possible to run the newspaper at one-third of the cost of normal press operations.

The Weekly Mail's creative use of DTP and laser-printing made it a leader in the field of new print technology in South Africa (if not in the world). Had it not shown this technological creativity, it is doubtful that a left-wing newspaper of this sort could have been kept successfully afloat. Weekly Mail perhaps represented the classic South African example of an Enzensbergian (or Benjamin-type) leftist 'gap-seeking' approach to the superstructures. In this way they demonstrated the value of rejecting the view that some communication technologies are complex, and hence are for the First World rather than the Third World. The way in which the Weekly Mail creatively used so-called First World information technology for an African struggle is perhaps an important (Enzensbergian) legacy for Leftists in other African situations to emulate. It is, in fact, unlikely that South

African leftists would have been able to develop the press network they did in the second half of the 1980s without exploiting this technology.

One key advantage the Weekly Mail has over the other left-wing press, however, is the profile of its readership. The Weekly Mail attracts left-wing professionals nationally, although most readers live in two key urban areas -- the Pretoria-Witwatersrand area (50%), and Cape Town area. (It also has a significant readership amongst exiles abroad). The readership profile is one that appeals to advertisers -- in 1989: 77% of readers were executives or professionals; 67% had a university degree; 34% had a post-graduate qualification; 43% had a household income of over R6000 per month, and 21% had a single income of over R6000 per month. It is a market-niche that the Guild Press ignored, which left a space for the Weekly Mail to fill.

The positioning of the Weekly Mail as a social democrat project, located 'between' the practices of the 'comrade' press and the liberal guild press has produced some interesting spin-offs for South African journalism. Guild press journalists have felt less threatened by the Weekly Mail than by the practices of the other left-wing press. This is perhaps the reason why towards the end of the 1980s the Weekly Mail often seemingly served as a conduit of news-leads and general 'leftist views' into guild press discourse. Both a co-editor of the Weekly Mail, Anton Harber, and the Star's editor, Richard Steyn have (during discussions with this author) pointed out that the gap between the guild and left-wing press narrowed in the three years prior to 1989. This had occurred from both sides. On the one hand, the mainstream press had been forced to take note of left-wing news they had previously ignored. On the other hand, the left-wing press had had to

take note of 'commercial' considerations and be responsive to readers (by, for example, covering entertainment and sports). The 1980s saw considerable changes in South African journalism, and the Weekly Mail was a key player in these changes.

## From counter hegemony to leftist hegemony: the Challenge for the future

During the 1980s the South African left achieved much. The popular phase of struggle proved to be a supremely successful form of resistance. Media activists played no small part in the success achieved. An outcome of these successes is that as South Africa entered the 1990s, some prospects existed for the creation of a leftist hegemony. But this required that the Left capitalize on its past achievements and adjust to the new context. The 1990-Reforms radically altered the context within which the left-wing press now operated. Max du Preez, editor of the Vrye Weekblad summed up the change well during an interview on the SABC English-Service (12.3.1991), during which he explained why the Vrye Weekblad was changing its format away from an Afrikaans 'alternative newspaper' and towards a bi-lingual magazine. He said: "Its yesterday's cause to be an alternative newspaper". Those running the left-wing presses will have to make significant changes to their operations if they are to survive and play a part in moving South Africa into a left-wing post-apartheid era. Weekly Mail and Vrye Weekblad were the first to recognize the need for such a shift.

A key recognition the Left needs to make is that a left hegemony in a post-apartheid South Africa is not a certainty. In particular, the formation of a democratic leftist hegemony is not guaranteed. A major struggle to consolidate past successes still lies ahead. In this struggle many still have to recognize just how important the media can

be for mobilizing the full potential left-constituency during the transitional phase. The 1990 reforms only increased the need for the Left to engage in media work. This is especially important to reach potential supporters (ie. the 'not yet converted' [3], but 'maybe' group). The Namibian elections for a Constituent Assembly should be a salutary lesson for the South African Left of the need to engage in media work. This should be undertaken at a level at least able to match the considerable efforts the Right puts into this site of struggle.

Thanks to the efforts in constructing a left-wing press during the 1980s the South African Left built up a considerable pool of editorial experience. (Unfortunately, media-management expertise was not developed to match this). This editorial experience will be useful in any 'superstructural struggle'. However, for the size of the battle ahead the pool of skills is still too narrow. Further, unless the financial problems that all the left-wing press have faced since 1990 can be solved, the pool seems more likely to shrink, rather than stabilize or grow.

Media training is needed to widen the pool, and especially to entrench media skills more deeply into grassroots structures. The latter notion -- of developing a grassroots media-proficiency -- is especially important if the Left is serious about building a leftist hegemony upon solid participatory-democratic grassroots structures (public spheres). A national-level democratic political culture will be more solidly grounded if such grassroots 'public spheres' (constructed upon a proficiency in all the technology of Information Age media-technology) serve as the foundation for a leftist hegemony. If the Left is serious about empowering 'the masses' and building a

democratic socialism in the Information Age then it will need to pay serious attention to the superstructures and the possibilities inherent therein.

In moving from a counter-hegemony mode of operation to one more suited to that of a ruling hegemony, the South African Left has much to take into the future from its 1980s experiences, especially:

1. The experience of Grassroots from 1980 to 1984. This experience carries with it the legacy of running a democratic grassroots 'public sphere'.
2. The social democrat 'independent' press tradition of a critical left-wing media. Such a media is required to point to errors made by leftist organizations and individuals. A sycophantic and grovelling left-wing press will not serve a left hegemony well. It will only blind the Left to its own short-comings. The experience of Eastern Europe provides evidence of this. What is more, given the real danger of reformed-Right/MNC pressures towards co-option of the South African struggle, a sycophantic 'Party Press' is the last thing the Left needs in facing the challenges of the future.
3. The dangers of relying upon others for financial support of a left-wing media have been illustrated by the left-commercial press. This press is in serious danger of closure in the 1990s. Caution is required with regard to Harvey Tyson's offer (made at the Rhodes Media Policy Workshop in September 1990) that the Argus Company may possibly consider helping the left-wing press with printing or a piggy-back distribution arrangement (see WIP, No69, 1990). Such an arrangement would only serve to create dependence. Rather the Left has to work out a subsidy arrangement that is socially regulated

(see Louw, 1990) and not dependent upon 'charity'.

4. The reasons for the relative failure of the left-commercial press (in terms of readerships) will also have to be addressed, as will the failure of the Daily Mail venture in 1990. As for the question of where to now for leftist media activists, the answer will, to a considerable extent, be bound up with the way in which the future balance of forces are resolved. The struggle is a long way from over. However, some abstract (theoretical) ideas, with a view to answering the question 'Quo vadis' will be attempted in Chapter 6.

FOOTNOTES

[1] In this thesis the term "hegemony" is taken to mean the way a ruling group rules in the Gramscian (1971) sense. The term "counter-hegemony" is used in a sense that is derivative of Gramsci's notion. Counter-hegemony means the way the opposition to a ruling hegemony can organize itself into a de facto 'government in the wings'. This phenomena will usually be associated with a civil war situation. In such cases the opposition can take on many of the characteristics of a 'hegemony'. However, it is a hegemony-in-waiting until the ruling hegemony is defeated. The South African Left (especially as institutionalized in the ANC/MDM) assumed the shape of such a counter-hegemony during the 1980s. The reforms of 2 February 1990 heralded a confirmation of the Left's status as a counter-hegemony. The reforms also heralded the start of a transition phase: the start of a blurring of the counter hegemony/hegemony role for the Left.

[2] Ironically, following the decline of BC as a significant political mobilizing force in the townships, it was the English-language Guild Press, and the black-titles owned by this Press, which provided a home for BC-oriented journalists. By the second half of the 1980s the Argus-owned Sowetan was the major media vehicle for the BC position.

[3] It is with regard to this concept of political competition and alliance building that the notion of 'The People' has become so potentially damaging to the Leftist struggle. This rhetorical term has led many on the Left to collapse the notion of 'the People' with 'the whole population'. In other words, support is assumed to be massive. Once this happens the necessity for competing for political support (in a Poulantzian sense) falls away. In its place comes the view that support is 'expected'.

Chapter 6

# A PROPOSAL FOR INTEGRATING MEDIA INTO THE RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA

Any South African Leftist hegemony established during the 1990s will emerge into a context in which the dominant relations of production are those associated with the Information Age form of MNC. This means the pressures for the co-option of the South African struggle by the (local and international) Right will be intense. The collapse of Eastern Europe has severely undermined not just the Marxist-Leninist project, but (by extension) also the 'socialist project'. It is a collapse that points to the serious need for a Left-wing reappraisal and reconstruction of leftist praxis (and of leftist hegemonic practices). There is a desperate need for the development of South Africa's human resources in the face of the damage wrought by apartheid. The sort of communication system that South Africa develops during the initial reconstructive phase will have a long-lasting and profound impact on the nature of the future society.

The South African Left is in danger of losing the struggle for superstructural control (to the Right and MNC) because of a leftist 'marginalization' of the importance of the superstructures. The idea of convening a 'national media summit' -- to develop a Left media policy -- was first raised in 1989. David Niddrie noted how the process that was supposed to lead to this summit died (WIP, No 70/71, 1990:41). The Rhodes Media Policy Workshop (September 1990) and the Idasa/Campaign for an Open Media 'Shape and Role of the Media' Conference (November 1990) helped to raise some of the key issues, despite some mutterings about inadequate 'consultation' with 'the people'[1]. Yet, despite this, the South African left remains far behind the Right (ie. both the

NP-dominated State and local capital) when it comes to knowing what they would do with a future media/communication infrastructure.

This lack of movement in the development of a left-wing media/communication policy should be a matter of considerable concern. Once more the Left is demonstrating an inertia when faced with the need to deal with communication, media and information technology. Too little account is taken of the legacy of those who have attempted to reconstruct historical materialism towards a concern with the superstructures. In the light of the earlier chapters of this thesis perhaps some general directions can be suggested upon which to base a media policy: (1) all citizens to be empowered by creating the 'spaces' in which they can participate in the running of their own lives, especially (but not exclusively) at grassroots levels; (2) the creation of public spheres at local level is one way of ensuring that an active/participatory political culture permeates all through society. Such a democratic communication infrastructure would also create a mechanism for the on-going articulation of grassroots 'feeling'. By empowering citizens at the grassroots, a public sphere could restrict the acquisition of social power by any comprador-class and/or technocratic-experts. It will further provide national policy makers a base from which to work in formulating policies that have mass support; (3) an active grassroots communication (public sphere/s) could serve as a brake on the development of a leftist nomenklatura and/or oligarchy; and (4) contemporary media and information technology hold 'liberatory potential' for the construction of a left-democracy based on local level public spheres. But making use of this potentiality requires that the Left breaks free of the limitations of orthodox historical materialism and its imposed inertia; and re-orientes leftist thinking

into a direct engagement with communication and the superstructures (see Habermas, 1990).

Rethinking 'Development'

A left-democratic popular communication (public sphere) requires a minimum of three things: Firstly, an infrastructure that facilitates an active grassroots participation -- ie. guaranteed 'access' to the grassroots and national communication process. A nation-wide series of Media Resource Centres (MRCs) [2] would be one form such an infrastructure could take. Secondly, all citizens must have the necessary training to be able to make use of such facilities, and to understand the possibilities such facilities have for empowering them. In fact, the creation of a fully functioning Information Age 'public sphere' would be impossible without a 'media literate' population, intellectually equipped to use all the potential available in contemporary information technology. Thirdly, there must be an openness towards keeping pace and utilizing the full range of the developments in information technology. One example would be the expanding possibilities the new telecommunications technology create for mass two-way communication (Kaplan, 1990: 17). Hence, the (neo-Luddite) notion that some technologies are only appropriate for the 'First (North) World' can only serve to retard social progress in contexts like South Africa. Instead of adopting a Ludditeism, the 'South' rather needs an openness to the (Benjamin/Enzensbergian) possibilities inherent in any and all technologies. This includes even those which appear very 'high-tech', like the electronic media. (Media Development Vol XXXIV, 4/1987, for example, drew attention to many of the possibilities that 'electronic networking' has for assisting

development in the South/Third World. Articles by Rodriguez and Polman are especially useful in this regard).

The proposal to utilize Information Age technology is not motivated by a panic-striken Third World desire to 'keep up' (White, 1882: 18-19). South Africa already has a significant technological-base from which to work. However, access to this technology has been largely confined to about 25% of the population (mostly white), and the existing base has not been utilized for democratic purposes. The challenges for the Left are: (i) to expand the size of the technological-base with the aim of giving all citizens access to the opportunities inherent in the technology; (ii) to develop means of employing this technology to 'democratize' society; and (iii) to ensure that technological decay does not set in. The danger of decay could arise in a number of guises: firstly, pressures from the underprivileged to redistribute wealth in a 'levelling down' process could easily translate into a destruction of the existing skills-base in one sector, without it being replaced in another. Secondly, if the future state alienated whites, massive emigration could result. This would effectively export much of the country's technological skills base -- a phenomenon already seen in other African states when they gained independence.

All of the above points need to be seen as serious 'development' concerns in the contemporary South African context. In fact, 'communication', 'access', 'participation' and 'development' need to be seen as part of a single process (see Nair & White, 1987).

The proposed infrastructure and training requires funds. But there could be an argument that South Africa is a 'developing society'

without the necessary funds [3] to allocate to such a scheme in a post-apartheid reconstruction. This would represent: (i) a betrayal of the democratic impulse within the popular counter-hegemony struggle of the 1980s; (ii) a short-sighted and highly limited interpretation of 'development'; (iii) the (unnecessary) e facto condemnation of South Africa to the status of a 'Third (South) World' society for the foreseeable future, instead of seeking to enable South Africa to become a full participant in the Information Age; and (iv) a missed opportunity to reconstruct and develop South Africa into a left-democratic society solidly grounded within the Information Age. It requires conceptualizing of the development/reconstruction of South Africa in a way that 'communication' (and the 'public sphere' notion) is fully integrated into a wider development programme. It need not mean massive additional outlays. Rather, it means a creative 'arrangement' of available 'development' funding such that the infrastructures and training required for democratic communication are made a part of the overall reconstruction/development plans. In other words, the development of democratic communication infrastructures should be part of (and 'piggy backed' upon) all other development work, rather than be seen as something separate from other development projects).

The challenge for the South African Left is to find a way to use the possibilities and spaces of the Information Age to construct a left-democracy. In meeting this challenge the Left need not start from a blank book. There exists the work of those who have already attempted to 'reconstruct' historical materialism such that this paradigm can deal more adequately with the superstructures (see Chapters 2 and 3). There is also the work of those who have attempted

to build a left-wing counter-hegemonic media in South Africa (see Chapter 5). The Cape's Grassroots project, in particular, went some of the way to demonstrating, on a micro scale, that the concepts of a 'public sphere' and 'popular communication' are not merely utopian (see also the Philippines experience as described by Dionisio, 1986). The South African Left, if it wins the first one-person-one-vote election, will have the opportunity to demonstrate this on a much larger scale. But to do so the Left will need to re-orientate itself towards the 'superstructural age'. It will need to develop leftist answers to the problems of social organization and social struggle in such an era where the superstructures are so dominant. The key challenges will be to demonstrate that: (1) 'top down' (MNC) relations of production and communication do not have to form the basis of either media or social organization in an information society; and (2) the Left is able to creatively use the democratic possibilities inherent in the Information Age to overcome the legacy of 'socialism-without-democracy' in Eastern Europe. The South African Left have the potential space to demonstrate that a practical leftist alternative does exist to both MNC and Marxist-Leninist vanguardism.

Towards a New Leftist theorization of a popular media/communication

During the 1980s the South African left-wing media accumulated an enormous range of experience. This media was influenced by differing elements of both 'popular' and socialist-democratic principles; some from external leftist sources, but some of local origin. However, this media practice was not always accompanied by a theoretical self-reflexiveness by media activists and media workers. In moving from counter-hegemony to hegemony, the Left will be in need of theoretical

self-reflexiveness. From Korsch's perspective such theoretical self-reflexivity is a valuable part of any leftist praxis. Creating a theoretical 'ideal' model of left-wing media can serve to create a useful touchstone for leftist praxis. With the possibility that South African leftists may soon be in a position to (re)construct the South African media, a theoretical reflexivity may be valuable at this point. Such a reflexivity will need to consider the work of those who have attempted to 'reconstruct' historical materialism, as well as the experiences of left media activists over the last decade so as to consider the future possibilities.

In such self-reflexivity a short-hand model is often useful. Lanigan & Strobl's summary of what they term the 'Marxist' approach to the media offers a helpful point of departure for conceptualizing a popular media/communication. They argue that this calls for: "A long-term strategy for the democratization of the mass media" which has six political goals. The six goals identified by Lanigan & Strobl (1981: 146-147) are:

(1) Changing the content of the mass media so that consumerism and persuasion which have permeated deeply into the consciousness of employees and wage earners is eliminated. In addition to Habermas, this notion has also featured in the work of the other Frankfurt School theorists on 'ideology', and in the work of Mattelart.

(2) Dismantling the capitalist system and thereby the existing structures of mass communication, and the subsequent creation of a political "proletarian publicity". The aim is to redistribute social power. This notion underpinned Enzensberger's view of

transforming media manipulation from a 'minority' to a 'majority' phenomenon. It is also the primary concern of culturalists (like Raymond Williams). They recognise that subaltern groups are not a passive mass, but are active, creative beings who therefore need 'spaces' for cultural expression.

(3) Creating worker participation in all areas of mass media production (on editorial, technical, and administrative levels), liberating the workers in media production from subjugation and dependence on the providers of capital. This notion can be found in all leftist writing on media work. Underlying this notion can be found a concern for ending the alienation caused by a lack of human control over the conditions in which people work in capitalist relations of production. It is a view that is especially well articulated in Marx's 1844 Manuscripts and Lukacs' History and Class Consciousness.

(4) Transferring media control from private owners to producers; expropriating privately run media businesses; decentralizing and demonopolizing media firms and transforming them into socialised institutions (open to participation on the entire allocative and operational spectrum). This goal ties into the previous two goals in so far as it is concerned with a process of de-alienating media work, and removing top-down minority control. This is central to this thesis' interpretation of organizing a New Leftist media -- an interpretation that draws extensively upon Habermas and Mattelart.

(5) Forming advertising and publicity cooperatives to distribute advertisements and publicity to all affiliated media on an equal basis and thereby preventing concentration of communication powers. This goal would tie into both a Mattelart-and Frankfurt

School-type opposition to the capitalist-organized culture industry.

(6) Politically activizing the masses for communicative emancipation and developing "communicative competence" - that is, action oriented toward reaching understanding - in the spontaneous creation of media programmes by involving the public in the articulation of objective societal needs and interests. Besides being a central notion in Habermas' work, this goal also ties into the culturalist notion of activating popular participation in cultural production.

Lanigan & Strobl's summary provides a basis from which to begin a theoretical exploration of a the role of communication/media in building a democratic-leftist hegemony. (They have not, however, provided a comprehensive list of all leftist media/communication concerns). Instead of Lanigan & Strobl's six goals, it is proposed that leftist debates about democratizing the media can actually be understood if they are dealt with within three subcategories.

* First, are questions relating to theoretically identifying what democratic-leftist structures would consist of, and working out how to practically create such structures. What is at issue here is a concern with creating democratic-<u>participatory</u> media structures. White (1982: 3-5; 1984: 22) widens this concern by connecting it to considerations of 'access' and 'accountability'. These structures will editorially complement leftist ideals and societal structures. Lanigan & Strobl's categories (1) and (2) refer to these issues.
* Second, are the questions relating to the active encouragement of society-wide <u>democratic</u> <u>practices</u> and the media's role in these. At

issue here is the generation of democratic practices and dialogue that penetrate into every sector of society, right through to the grassroots; and to what extent democratic practices will be assisted by a democratic media structure. Lanigan & Strobl's categories (3), (4), (5), and (6) refer to these issues.

* Third, are questions relating to how to prevent the emergence of a new (minority) ruling group which accumulates power and wealth at the expense of the majority in society. Two possible South African distortions of leftist practice in this regard would be a nomenklatura system, or a co-option of sectors of the Left into comprador arrangements with MNC. Both would violate the principles of a (New) left-democracy. White (1984 22) has proposed various measures to ensure that democratic communication infrastructures, once implemented, are sustained.

Various projects have attempted to institutionalize the above notions into a left-democratic media practice. Some examples would be Chile (see Mattelart, 1983: 262); Nicaragua (Mattelart, 1986; and White, 1989 and 1990); Mocambique (De Vasconcelos, 1990); community media projects in Britain (Nigg & Wade, 1980); resource centre projects in South Africa (Karlsson, 1989; and Criticos, 1989); and the South African Grassroots project. This venture attempted to prevent: (a) the granting of a privileged position to media activists/workers; and (b) the development of uni-directional (top-down) communication which would turn the masses into mere passive recipients of media messages. As Mattelart (1983:362) states:

> The left, even if it goes along with the rules of the market, cannot allow its publications to remain passive objects. A new culture cannot be imposed. A new culture is created by the various revolutionary sectors; they create it by participating

organisationally in its creation."

Participation is the key word in organizing popular media (see Mattelart, 1983; Traber, 1989; and White, 1980, 1983a: 7-8, and 1989). A democratic media system serving a 'popular' counter-hegemonic or hegemonic structure means building a real two-way communication network, or 'public sphere'. White (1982, 1984) developed an especially coherent theorization of the principles underpinning such a left-democratic media. Christians (1987:22) has noted the need to move away from the "negative freedom" of the Enlightenment and towards the positive freedom of a participative culture. Christians (1987) draws on the work of both White and Paulo Freire (1972) to develop the notion of communication as "open spaces". In other words, 'spaces' (or 'public spheres' within which this positive freedom can be exercised. Such a participative-democratic communication structure would represent the very antithesis of the 'culture industry' (and the 'Enlightenment culture') described by Adorno & Horkheimer (1979) and Marcuse (1968). And because it would be a participative media it offers (i) a communicative vehicle for counteracting the social anomie and alienation associated with being 'controlled', rather than being 'in control' (see Lukacs, 1971; Marx, 1981: 69-71; and Bahro, 1981: 151); and (ii) a space for the full articulation and growth of popular culture (see Clarke, et al, 1979; and Thompson, 1963).

What is required is a conceptualization which moves away from the notion of media as the source of information. Journalists should be seen as the 'facilitators' of social communication instead of as the 'originators' of media messages (see Richieri, 1983:406-407). This is especially important in South Africa where decades of neo-fascist rule stunted the development of an indigenous 'democratic culture' (amongst

both the ruling and ruled). A media encouraging the growth of dialogue, from grassroots level, would be an invaluable 'mechanism' in the development of a participative-democratic culture. An active popular culture -- as described by the culturalists -- is not enough. What is required is a mechanism for institutionalizing this activity such that such activity can be further stimulated; and an active grassroots political culture can directly impact on national policy. (The latter is seen as a reasonable guarantee against the possible rise of a co-opted comprador class, and/or nomenklatura oligarchy). Mattelart (1983:364) argues that media should be seen as:

> mechanisms allowing the workers to develop their level of awareness, and hence their ability to assess and give opinions about published products and thereby to avoid the risk of manipulation by those with longer experience.

Ideally, such participation should be implemented during the transition (negotiation) phase leading to one-person-one-vote system in South Africa. In reality, it seems unlikely that this will be possible because: (1) the other (rightist) parties to the negotiations will block such developments; (2) until the Left comes to power no possibility exists of funds being allocated to the creation of the sort of communication infrastructure needed; (3) the transition period will be characterised by posturing the rhetoric; and (4) the myopic Left has not recognised how important it is. For this reason it is more likely that a Leninist 'top-down' communication form will characterise the transition period. In addition, the ANC is unlikely to have sufficient resources to develop even an effective in-house counter- hegemonic dialogical communication structure (able to make its own constituency effectively part of real decision-making) during this transition phase.

But if a counter-hegemonic dialogue is not a realistic possibility

this is no reason not to aim for a post-transition (hegemonic) social-dialogue infrastructure. If the Left succeeds in acquiring power then social resources will become available for the implementation of a popular communication infrastructure. In addition, state power will open the door to granting a legal status to participatory communicaion (see White, 1984: 22). And the local legacy exists from which to build such a popular media. In other words, it is a proposal that grows organically out of the local context (White, 1982: 2). Grassroots in particular represented a significant attempt to try and structurally implement the idea of the media as a facilitator of an intra-counter hegemonic alliance dialogue (see Patel, 1985). The Grassroots experience represents one potential key for the building of a New Left hegemony (and culture). The foundation for this is a democratic (popularist) media infrastructure. Other keys would be the experience of MRCs and other left-media projects that have been run in South Africa and elsewhere (see MRC, 1989; DMTG, 1990; Louw et al, 1990b; Chapter 5 of this thesis; and White, 1980, 1989 and 1990).

The participatory 'public sphere' seen in the 1980-1984 Grassroots model could provide especially important lessons in any attempt to build a (post-transition) South African (popular-democratic) communication system which does not follow the 'culture industry' model. From Grassroots can be taken the idea that members of the community are to be challenged in such a way that they develop communicative skills and an awareness of events around them (Johnson, 1985). Simultaneously, the 'professional' media workers learn to work (democratically) with the different groups within the community, and as a part of that community. They learn not to consider themselves as

either hierarchically privileged, or as being the source of information. A left-wing media organized along these lines becomes a facilitator for communication and learning: skills are developed throughout the community, and democratic 'habits' are learned by both intellectuals ('professional' media workers) and the members of the community organizations involved in the communication process. This is the basis of any popularist conception of 'media' as a means of generating 'democracy' rather than as a means of generating 'information'.

A genre of journalism that sees itself as a facilitator of democracy needs to place an emphasis on feedback (see Morley, et al, 1982; and White, 1982:4). Within the 'ideal' Grassroots model (1980 to 1984) much emphasis was placed on feedback, with community perceptions being continually canvassed. This was done in a number of ways:

* the news-gathering meeting (comprised of representatives of community organizations) critically evaluated the previous edition. In addition, because the progressive-alternative press intentionally set itself up as an integral part of the 'democratic movement', its doors were always open to the community and its organizations. (Also, prior to the intensification of police repression, the offices of this press were often used as meeting places by the 'democratic movement'). As a result, a high level of 'contact' and press-community liaison was achieved;
* correspondence received was considered an important barometer of community opinion, and so letters, and letters' pages, were accorded great attention by those working in the project; and
* the distributors of the newspapers were encouraged to canvass readers' opinions about the previous edition and to feed this back.

Taking this micro-level 'public sphere' model and finding ways to develop it into a into a macro-level (society-wide) hegemonic media model is a central 'ideal' of any New Leftist reconstruction of the South African media/communication infrastructure. Perhaps the best guarantee of a democratic political culture in a post-apartheid society would be to try and get every constituency to develop its own media. This complements White's (1989:19, 1984:22) notion of the "variety" of groups and styles to be integrated into popular communication. Encouraging diversity would facilitate participatory (popular) communication. After all, a left-participatory media could not be expected to deal effectively with non-leftist opinion (see Louw, 1990). A society blanketed by multitudes of such public spheres (each serving its own constituency) would provide the foundation for a mass-based, participative, yet pluralistic political culture. The experience of progressive church workers offers some valuable insights in this regard (see Murphy, 1986). This is, of course, a conception of popular communication read through a hybridization of Poulantzas' Eurocommunist and Habermas' reconstructed historical materialist world views. A potential problem, however, would be to get every constituency to operate such a democratic media system, especially on the Right (where participatory-democracy is not a traditional mode of organization).

Building popular democratic media also means re-thinking the actual <u>management</u> of journalism (see Traber, 1985). From the outset, the producers of <u>Grassroots</u> recognised that if progressive alternative newspapers were to be an integral part of the wider movement for democratic change in South Africa, then it would be inappropriate for

Grassroots to adopt undemocratic and hierarchical organizational structures and journalistic practices. This principle informed, to some extent, each of the left wing presses inside South Africa after 1980, although the form has not always been an exact replication of the Grassroots model.

The South African progressive-alternative press favoured control of the process by community and worker organizations. This was achieved through mandated representatives of those organizations elected to governing bodies of the papers. (Neither the left-commercial nor the social democrat press, however, adopted this principle). This community control principle did not exclude the existence of a small core of 'professional' permanent staffers. In fact, the actual success of such publications depended to a large extent on the availability of permanent skilled staffers. However, to use the example of Grassroots (in its 'ideal' form): such staffers were subject to the 'control' of the GB. The executive committee was re-elected annually, hence ensuring 'popular' control or what White (1982: 5) would call "accountability". Because the permanent staffers had to work alongside various sub-committees (news-gathering; advice; production; finance and advertising; and distribution) their 'accumulation of power' was curtailed. However, by working alongside the community members, the intellectuals in question won the respect of the community. Such staffers were paid considerably less than those working for the other presses. As a result, working for a progressive-alternative newspaper demanded considerable 'commitment' to the ideals underpinning the 'popular democratic' movement. The sort of staffers attracted were prepared to work within the framework of democratic

control over their work. A new genre of popularist journalism emerging out of the process.

Trying to make democracy work

It is, however, easy to produce 'ideal' models about democratic journalism. It is less easy to make it work in practice: firstly, there is the potential problem of finding a way to ensure that the writers (from the news-gathering committees) and leftist correspondents (in the case of 'national' news) do not willfully present a distorted picture of the organizations they support. (Such 'distortion need not even be 'willful', but could occur by 'omission'). Such a practice would not benefit any counter-hegemony (or hegemony) because it would not thereby provide them with the sort of accurate picture they need to operate effectively. An example since 1990 is that both the progressive-alternative and left-commercial presses demonstrated an ANC-sycophantism harmful to the Left: none of these newspapers exposed the failure of the ANC to organise itself or its constituency into an effective post-reform political force.

Secondly, because it is **easier** to use authoritarian methods and to organize structures using hierarchical pecking-orders, practical democracy is continually at risk in practice. Both the South African left-commercial and social-democrat presses did, in fact, experience this problem during the 1980s. (For a discussion of such problems at New African see Ntshakala & Emdon, 1991).

Thirdly, democratic organization becomes very difficult when Right-wing pressures and repression are operative. This, for example, became a real problem in South Africa between 1985 and 1989 when the community networks which underpinned the left presses were largely smashed by

state repression. Of course, Habermas (1976) would attempt to find a way to turn even this problematic to the advantage of the Left. He would argue that MNC's need for a commandarist style means that the system cannot ultimately 'deliver' its promise of 'democracy'. When MNC relations of production are under real threat because of demands for real democracy, the Right will, of necessity, resort to 'obvious' repression. But Habermas would argue that the Left can turn this contradiction (a "legitimation crisis") to their advantage. This is where Habermas' and Enzensberger's ideas merge. The legacy of the South African struggle in the 1980s, in part, validates this notion. Rightist repression actually came to fuel, rather than stop the struggle once the popular grassroots had been 'activated' beyond a certain threshold.

Fourthly, popular democratic communication can also lend itself to two forms of leftist 'distortions'. Firstly, careerist leaders can learn to use the language and style of 'popular democracy' to manipulate popular-left structures for their own advancement. The rhetoric of 'democracy' can be used to achieve <u>de facto</u> minority control (see Ntshakala & Emdon, 1991). Such manipulation is difficult to overcome, because anyone challenging such practices will be accused of 'divisiveness'. Secondly, an unrealistic 'anarchistic' impulse can be 'empowered' by popular communication structures. In other words, all decision-making can be effectively blocked by a 'democratic proceduralism' in which the demand is raised that everybody participates in all decisions. Such a proceduralism can effectively halt leftist praxis and give the Right an advantage over the Left. Those operating popular-left communication structures should be continually aware of these dangers.

Fifthly, how can left intellectuals (eg. journalists) be prevented from becoming a new elite -- an Information Age nomenklatura. Korsch's view is that there is a division of labour between base and superstructural activities. But both Korsch and Benjamin would not see this as a reason for an anti-intellectualism or anti-superstructuralism. (As White (1989:18) notes, "distrust and tension" often characterises the response towards intellectuals from popular-community groups). Both Korsch and Benjamin would rather want to see the Left to recognize the importance of harnessing the power intellectual/superstructural activity can produce. The question is how to prevent the division of labour becoming hierarchically fixed such that the petit bourgeoisie (who 'inhabit' the 'information realms') come to uncritically adopt the social practices of a new ruling elite. In the Information Age the danger of such an acquisition of social power and status is extensive. As Gramsci noted, the superstructural activities are the 'organizational' roles in society. This means an inbuilt propensity exists for the transformation of those groups occupying those realms into new ruling elite roles. What is needed is a recognition that a unified bloc requires diversity and division of labour. A hegemonic-alliance must be structured in such a way that both extremist positions of: (i) an intellectual elitism, and (ii) an anti-intellectualism are avoided.

In the sixth place, the organization of counter-hegemonic democratic communication networks represents a comparatively easy task compared to trying to organize a popularist hegemony. After all, popularist counter-hegemonies, by their very nature, are smaller than hegemonies. A hegemony has to incorporate everyone in a society, rather than merely

the opposition.

But in considering the role of popular media in the creation of a left-democracy (ie. a macro-scale consideration) one need not confine oneself to only the communicological aspects. (In other words those issues discussed by Mattelart, White, Habermas, Enzensberger, and CCS). In working through the relationship of popular communication to leftist-democracy, the theoretical work of Gramsci and Poulantzas read together offers some valuable insights. Within the general parameters of 'reconstructing' historical materialism, these two help to congeal many of the issues central to developing left-democratic communication. Poulantzas (1980) and Gramsci (1971) provide a theoretical basis for conceiving of how a New Leftist hegemony (a socialist-democratic pluralism) might be organized. In this way they provide a means for (i) 'concretizing' Habermas' notion of a 'public sphere' and (ii) widening Mattelart's work on 'popular communication' so that the 'socio-political' (rather than just 'media') implications are revealed. With the South African left (potentially heading into a period of hegemony construction), theoretical ruminations are not out of place at at the time of writing. Poulantzian/Gramscian (left-pluralist hegemonic) propositions also help to bring into focus some of the communicological issues that arise from trying to organize a popular communication infrastructure:

(i) Should media structure(s) be centralized, decentralized or a mixture of both. How this question is resolved has enormous implications for what sort of hegemony will be constructed; for the nature and extent of possible participation; and for the likelihood of the emergence of a new ruling elite. From a Poulantzian perspective a de-centralized (and hence more plural)

media would be preferable.

(ii) How to attempt to prevent the emergence of a new class of 'manipulators' (ie. a new petit bourgeois media elite tied into a comprador or nomenklatura class). In the Information Age the potential for media and information workers to acquire social power is very great. This power is linked (in the present world-wide 'culture industry') to MNC interests. What role can the media play in either facilitating or blocking such a development? The Gramsci-Poulantzas notion of hegemony construction offers a conception of diffused and pluralized power, and hence (at least potentially) of a reduction of centralized (vanguardist) power.

(iii) How to create the conditions for permanent social change, and/or prevent social inertia witnessed in the East European failure to deal with Information Age relations of production? In Marcusian-type language this might be termed keeping the dialectic 'alive', and/or preventing the development of the 'one-dimensional man' phenomenon. A Gramscian-Poulantzian conception of the dialectic would be built upon the notion of pluralist competition for (economic and superstructural) resources -- a competition that would drive the process of social change.

(iv) How to create democratically participative/interactive media without this dissolving into a media (and social) anarchism. One is not talking of a free-for-all, but rather of a pluralist, yet popular media (see Louw, 1990); and

(v) Whether capitalist media-marketing should be rejected, or turned to socialist-advantage. The Eurocommunist perception of Poulantzas would be open to the Left making use of the techniques

developed by MNC. This can be extended to the wider Enzensbergian question of whether it is possible or desirable for leftists to 'keep their hands clean'.

Most importantly, a Poulantzas-Gramscian view is able to conceive of a society ordered in accordance with a recognition of the permanence of social diversity. This view also sees this diversity as positive in terms of an active social dialectic. Building a (New) Left hegemony upon such a recognition necessitates an alliance-type politics of the sort associated with popularist politics. A Poulantzian-Gramscian view provides a conceptual framework around which a left-democratic ordering of society (and left-democratic media, or Habermasian 'public sphere') can be built. Recognizing the permanence of social diversity also means the Left needs to focus in on the shifting patterns of social power, and skewed power relationships. In other words, a notion wider than 'class' and 'economic relations of production' alone (see Habermas, 1990). This increases the importance of 'political communication' and 'public opinion' in leftist praxis (Habermas, 1990: 18-21).

What Poulantzas specifically offers is a way of constructing a theory which combines historical materialist conflict theory with the notion of political pluralism. The result is the negation of the notion of pluralism as a functional stable social structure/process, where stability is generated through a pluralistic overlapping of interest groups. (For an example of such a functionalist view of pluralism see Dahl, 1961). A stable functionalist pluralism contradicts an historical material concern with inherent social conflict. A dynamic pluralism (a situation of social conflict) is, however, compatible with a leftist position in which dialectical-conflict is emphasized (for example, Lukacs and Marcuse). Poulantzas produces a

way of reading pluralist-democracy in a non-functional way. In true Eurocommunist fashion, Poulantzas accepts the idea of autonomous, yet overlapping interest groups. Although he could be accused of paying little attention to the notion of dialectical conflict, his ideas none-the-less are fully compatible with the idea of a dialectical conflict, or Enzensberger's concept of media praxis.

From Gramsci we can take the notion of hegemony; from Poulantzas the notion of class fractions. The two together give us a way of conceptualizing a hegemonic alliance of pluralist 'fractions'. In terms of a Gramscian-Poulantzian view, society can be conceptualized of as consisting of two separate sets of alliances. Each alliance can be conceived of as consisting of the overlapping interest groups ('class fractions') that pluralists speak of. But from Gramsci's perspective such alliances are not 'natural' functionalist phenomena. Instead they have to be brought into being by hegemonic labour during which time various patterns of class fractions are welded together. Social conflict occurs between the two alliances. Such a reading produced a New Leftist understanding of social conflict and democracy. This understanding has important implications for both the theory and practice of left-wing media/communication [4]. The Gramsci-Poulantzas approach slides easily into Habermas' notion of a 'public sphere' as democratic communication and a dialogical (pluralist) conflict. It also provides a conceptualization of society which increases enormously the importance of the media (and culture) for the Left.

This reading shows that a Left-alliance, and its conflict with the Right-alliance, has to be 'worked at' (before, during and after any transfer of power to the Left). Such hegemonic-work can take place at

at least five levels: (i) each separate sub-group of the alliance needs to be 'created', organized and held together; (ii) the interactions between the sub-groups need to be organized ('managed'); (iii) the over-arching alliance and its relationship(s) with its sub-components needs to be 'created', organized ('managed'), and held together; and (iv) the relationship (conflict) between the Left and Right alliances must be organized. This latter hegemony-work includes (v) the attempts to disrupt the Rightist-alliance and its sub-components, as well as attempts to 'recruit' from out of the right alliance those sub-groups and individuals who may be 'compatible' with the Left-alliance. Each of these five aspects is intimately tied up with communication/media work.

The notion of alliances between 'fractional' interests also lends itself to the conceptualization of micro-level conflicts and hegemony building. Local (micro) struggles need to be seen in the context of larger struggles. However, 'local' should not be allowed to degenerate into what Mattelart & Piemme (1983:416) call 'localism'[5]. In South Africa (as in the USSR), localism could assume an especially dangerous form if linguistic differences became entangled with such local level democratic structures. At any rate, the notion of facilitating local/grassroots struggle grants greater autonomy to micro-level engagements. (This also means a recognition that the Left can advance in one local area and simultaneously retreat in another. It also allows for a more pluralistic-democratic understanding of (left) hegemony construction. This reduces the possibility of the emergence of a centralized <u>nomenklatura</u> ruling elite. From a media/communication perspective this means that different Left-media can be encouraged to serve <u>different</u> local groups, different issues, class fractions, etc.

Each 'fraction' could conceivably be served separately, as a parallel operation to creating a unified alliance. Pluralism need not inhibit 'unity', and/or 'unity' need not mean 'uniformity'. It is precisely such pluralism that drives dialectical change (and/or prevents inertia) because the alliance patterns would (presumably) continually be shifting. Hence social conflict would be on-going. In such a scenario a 'public sphere' would facilitate the conflicts which drive the social dialectic. Hence, communication becomes a key feature of both left-democracy and left-revolution.

Running together aspects of Gramsci and Poulantzas' work provides left-wing media theoreticians and practitioners with a conceptual framework of how to set about building a democratic (pluralist)-leftist media. This conceptual framework is of potential use in developing a leftist scheme for avoiding the East European failure to utilize the possibilities inherent in the Information Age to develop a left-democracy. A media network should: (i) help create and maintain popular-grassroots (participatory) democracy; (ii) assist in militating against vanguardism (and other pressures towards anti-democratic 'top-down' rule); (iii) provide structures small and accessible enough (because they are at the local and 'fractional' level) to allow mass democratic (two-way) participation; and (iv) provide a learning-experience through the participation it facilitates. This should: improve the self-image (in the Fanon sense) participants would have of themselves; spread technical and social skills; and teach a respect for democracy itself).

South Africa entered a transitional phase in the 1990s. It is a transition in which the Left will -- if they are able to successfully

mobilize the power inherent in their large constituency -- be key players. A window of opportunity exists for: developing South Africa into a fully-fledged player in the Information Age; but for using the potentialities of the Information Age in a leftist way so as to develop a left-participatory-democracy (based on the popularist principles so central to the South African struggle of the 1980s).

A role for Media Training and Media Resource Centres in democratic development

Theory may be important, but within a Korschian totality, practice is equally important. There is a need to go beyond popularist media theorizing and conceive of the practical requirements for the development of a left-democratic hegemony based upon a national 'public sphere'. An important challenge for the South African Left would be to show that a mass participative democracy can be practically built using: the experiences of the South African popularist counter-hegemony phase; the popular communication experiences as developed in other contexts (for example, as described by Mattelart and White); and the (co-opted) information technology of MNC.

If the Left take on such a challenge, two key practical requirements are: firstly, a nation-wide grassroots media infrastructure of both the local-level Grassroots (public sphere) type, and Media Resource Centres (MRCs). This could serve to create an infrastructure that local communities can themselves control (see White, 1989: 17-18). Secondly, mass training and education to enable and encourage all citizens (who want to) to use such an infrastructure must be developed. This, of course, implies a degree of central (state) planning to create such an infrastructure. This sets such a proposal apart from White's (1988:34-35) view that the democratization of communication will not come about

as a result of national planning, but rather will come from the 'margins' (White, 1984:36). What White (1988) perhaps points to is the need for care to be exercised: a national plan to democratize communication will come to nothing unless grassroots support for such a scheme exists. At the very least this perhaps requires that MRCs only be placed in a community after consultations and negotiations with the affected community (although ideally, as White (1982:8) notes, communication policy-making itself should be formulated within a participatory process). What is ultimately being proposed is a scheme that draws on both 'group communication' and 'people's communication' concepts (White, 1989). In other words, a 'top-down' group communication plan is proposed. However, it is a planned intervention aimed at facilitating/ encouraging a bottom-up communication, including "comunicacion popular" (White, 1980:4,8). Post-apartheid South Africa may provide a unique opportunity for such a scheme to be attempted -- it may not be replicable elsewhere.

In the reconstruction and development of South Africa in the post-apartheid era a nation-wide MRC infrastructure seems the most direct way for establishing the framework for a popular-participative political culture ('public sphere'). This should be built upon the back of Information technology. However, this will require that the Left find a way to remove the asymmetrical power relationship associated with existing information technology (White, 1982:20-22). In other words, this technology must be co-opted into a system of participatory controls which 'democratizes' the potential inherent within the Information Age. A nation-wide MRC programme would have a number of advantages; it would provide: (i) the basic rudimentary

infrastructure around which to construct both a local level and national level public sphere (ie. participative left-hegemony); (ii) a vehicle not only for direct media participation, but also for media training and media education. (Such education would be especially important during the early phase of trying to implement a popular-left hegemony based upon a public sphere); and (iii) a context ('space') in which to bring together, in a participative working arrangement, community members, trade unionists, activists in other spheres of community life, and intellectuals (information workers, writers, film makers, academics, etc). Such an MRC network has the potential for activating both popular culture and a mass-based participative political culture.

Building such a national (macro-level) MRC/public sphere network would be an enormous challenge never before attempted. In seeking a way forward in this regard, some British micro-level community media projects (see Nigg & Wade, 1980) give some clues as to how to proceed with implementing the ideas found in Habermas and/or Mattelart's work [6]. The experiences of these British community media projects can be summed up thus:

* Resource centres were set up in underprivileged communities;
* Centres were located for easy community access.
* A wide variety of media equipment was kept in these centres.
* This equipment was made available to community groups.
* The centres were staffed by trained media activists.
* The media activists did not produce media. Rather, they helped community members to make their own media by (i) helping them with technical advice; (ii) teaching community members how to use the equipment; (iii) booking out the equipment; and (iv) servicing and

maintaining the equipment.

* By making media equipment and training available, underprivileged communities were given the opportunity of creating a local level social dialogue (or public sphere). In other words, they talked to themselves about issues they saw as important in their communities. This enabled the community to mobilize itself and so develop grassroots democratic organization.
* The resultant media could also be used to get messages though to the 'establishment'. In other words, the community was given a media voice. In addition, the media could be shown to other similar (underprivileged) communities and so serve as a catalyst for similar mobilizing excercises there.
* The approach is an important alternative to Leninist vanguardism. It is a 'public sphere' that empowers citizens to take control of their own lives and communities. They are also enabled to communicate their perceptions and wishes. White (1980, 1989) discussed Latin American moves to establish this sort of community-empowering communication. It is conception that gets to the very heart of the underpinning assumption of a New Leftist popular communication: let all people speak for themselves [7]. This should not merely be a paper right (as in the libertarian media model). Rather, ALL sectors of society should be guaranteed the actual resources and facilities to make their views known (see White, 1984: 22).

Each of the community media projects described by Nigg & Wade (1980) hold important lessons for a possible South African popular communication/media policy. Each illustrates how Information Age electronic-media technology can be co-opted for left-wing social

organization. In other words they demonstrate the possible (popular-democratic) organizational-style for the building of the local (grassroots) sections of any nation-wide public sphere. Such a style could serve as a model for organizing the network of MRCs previously proposed in this chapter. Any argument that these experiences are inappropriate for South Africa because Britain is more developed is spurious given the integration of South Africa into the MNC/Information Age. Further, even though each of the above three projects utilized electronic media technology, there would be no need for South African MRCs to limit themselves to only electronic media. South African MRCs could utilize the operating-style developed in these British media projects and apply them to any form of media -- print, electronic, paint media, etc. Each MRC in South Africa could be tailored to the local context -- ie. MRCs in highly urban areas (eg. Hillbrow/ Berea/ Yeoville; Cape Town Central/Seapoint; Albert Park/Berea/Point; or Sunnyside/Arcadia) could stock all media technology but perhaps 'emphasize' a cable TV network, 'electronic networking' (see Media Development Vol 34, 4/1987), and video (see Media Development, Vol 36, No 4/1989; Festa & Santoro, 1987; and Lazerus & Tomaselli, 1989). MRCs in informal settlement areas (eg. Inanda or Winterveld) could 'emphasize' a local community radio station and print media. ( Media Development Vol 37, 4/90 looked at various possibilities for using radio for local level democracy and development). MRCs in suburban areas (with lower urban population densities) could possibly emphasize community newspapers of the Grassroots genre. MRCs in rural areas could emphasize cassette tapes, local community radio, or a combination of cassette tapes and radio.

In seeking models for the construction of community media and MRCs

one need not only look to overseas experiences. In addition to Grassroots' type experiences, South African leftists have also gained experience in constructing MRCs in the process of building a counter-hegemony during the 1980s. An example would be the Media Resource Centre (MRC-UND) at the University of Natal, Durban (MRC, 1989) [8]. The key assumptions underpinning this project have been 'participation' and 'access' on the part of underprivileged groups (Criticos, 1989). Further, the MRC-UND facilitated the spreading of media skills in the Durban area through facilitating the running of media training courses and workshops for community groups and trade unions. Thereafter, those trained have had available, on an on-going basis, the MRC-UND's workshop area for the production of media. MRC-UND staff have been available to give advice when problems arose. However, these staff will not produce media for community groups since community members are expected to produce their own media. Rather the staff merely assist and advise. A complementary organization, the DMTG, provided media-training to community groups requesting such training. Once trained the MRC's facilities were available for on-going media-production. Through this MRC facility, Durban's grassroots community groups, and trade unions were enabled to become active media producers -- something that they would not have been financially able to do without the existence of the MRC-UND. The MRC-UND has thus represented -- despite problems (see Deacon, 1991) -- a small step on the road towards democratizing media in the Durban area by making communication resources available to groups who would otherwise have been denied access to media resources.

If local level 'public spheres' are to be built in South Africa then a network of MRCs, such as the one pioneered by the MRC-UND, will be

required to facilitate the process by providing 'access' to media resources on a mass scale.

The challenge for South African Leftists will be to attempt to see if the small-scale counter-hegemonic media projects -- such as Grassroots, MRC-UND, DMTG, the projects described in Nigg & Wade (1980), and the Latin American experiences in building 'communication centres' (White, 1989) -- can serve as a conceptual basis upon which to build a (macro-scale) left-hegemonic media system -- ie. a national media system which can facilitate mass participative democracy.

Transferring petty bourgeois leftist counter-hegemonic experiences into the construction of a leftist hegemony will be fraught with conceptual, methodological and ideological difficulties (Tomaselli et al, 1988) Lazerus and Tomaselli, 1989; Tomaselli and Prinsloo, 1990; Deacon, 1991). But once in a position of hegemony, the Left would have the advantage of access to state funds and infrastructures. Althusser, for one, noted the central importance of ISAs. A crucial ISA the Left would 'inherit' would be the education system. This superstructure holds enormous possibilities for the implementation of any program to create a popular public sphere. Indeed, a prerequisite for multiplying the (micro) experiences of popularist media like Grassroots, MRC-UND, DMTG, and other community media projects into a macro-system is the requirement for a massive media training/education programme. Such a programme is perhaps best conceived of as a part of the reconstruction of the primary and secondary school system. This will, in any case, be required in a post-apartheid South Africa. MRCs need to be linked into the network of primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions (especially during the take-off phase). This will make it possible to create a media literate population and the necessary media

infrastructure by a process of 'piggy backing' the building of a community media/MRC 'public sphere' onto the education-development drive. Such an approach would use up considerably less of the society's scarce (development) resources. It would however require some mechanism for cutting through the red-tape and bureaucratic defence of autonomous 'turfs' that would be bound to occur. It would also require a 're-orientation' of education syllabi in order that media be placed more centrally into such syllabi. This education-based orientation is, to some extent, a 'top-down' approach. But if South Africa is to fully enter the Information Age this will, in any case, be a good move. In the Information Age media literacy and proficiency in using the media is not a luxury. It is a prerequisite for functioning as a full social being. 'Access' to MRCs is important, but not enough; the provision of media literacy and skills training are equally important.

Media training/education is needed to provide the mass of citizens knowledge of the media necessary to operate a democratic communication system (see White, 1982:5-6). Media training is thus the short-to-medium term key to passing on the full potential of the Information Age to all South Africans, and/or for co-opting MNC Information Age technology for the construction of a democratic-left hegemony in Enzensbergian/Benjamin fashion. It becomes vital that considerable attention be paid to the quality of both media education (ie. the diffusion of media literacy amongst the wider public) and training (ie. the production of media workers).

## Towards a New Leftist approach to teaching media

In examining all aspects of cultural production and consumption (including media and the teaching of media) CCS begins by asking two

fundamental (and interrelated) questions: who benefits? and who loses? At heart these are questions of power and context; and questions of how power affects cultural meanings and practices (Boyd-Barrett et al, 1987; and Punter, 1986).

If the objective is to empower all citizens through a public sphere infrastructure then 'critical' and 'aware' media producers and users are called for [9]. For Habermas this gets to the heart of the leftist project in the contemporary world: to use the public sphere to 'generate ferment', and 'work for a redistribution of power' (Habermas, 1990:19-21). A prerequisite for a functioning popular communication is a citizenry that is fully equipped to make use of the 'democratic spaces' information technology may provide. Considerations on equipping the citizenry for popular communication is an area that Mattelart leaves too fallow. Both media producers and users need to be taught to be continually aware of the power relationships underpinning media messages (and media technology). In this way they will learn to understand the social implications of how they, and others, are relating to the media. Journalists, for example, should be taught to go beyond merely knowing how to produce a news story. They also need to consider who benefits/who loses through them using a particular style of news-gathering? Why have they been taught to do their job in a particular way? Why are newsrooms and the wider media-institutions configured the way they are? Why has certain media technology been developed (and by whom), while other areas of research-and-development are left fallow?

In similar vein media users need to be made more aware and questioning of existing (and possible) patterns of media ownership;

news selection; television programming; etc. Both media producers and users need to learn about how existing media-relations (including the influence of both state intervention and market forces) may be manipulating them, and may be curtailing the possibilities inherent in communication-technology. People need to be made more aware of the immense potential the media holds for improving their lives. It can do this through facilitating more social interaction and by making information, entertainment and a participative political culture more readily available for all. The potential such an accessible and participative media holds for accelerating cultural innovation and growth is enormous. If Habermas is correct, once people know the potential they will demand access to this potential. Skewed power relationships will not be tolerated once people know they are skewed (Habermas, 1990:19). For Habermas (1980) this demand is the key to building a "rational society". By this means a society and/or hegemony is constructed in accordance with both democratic and socialist principles.

If the media is to be 'liberated' it needs to be accompanied by a critical and informed citizenry. This requires 'teaching the media' in a particular way: an understanding of context needs to be incorporated into all media training and media education. Linked to this would be the notion of social struggle (Tomaselli, 1986b). Media literacy requires that people be made aware of the struggles taking place in society; the way those involved in the struggles manipulate and/or are manipulated by the media; and how certain players in the struggle have advantages afforded them by their direct ownership of, or behind-the-scenes influence over, media institutions. A public with such knowledge (of media, context and struggle) would be equipped to be

critical 'readers' of media texts. In this way they would be less susceptible to manipulation by the media, and by the interests behind the media. Hence, a successful media education programme would make the very notion of 'user' and/or 'consumer' of media somewhat redundant because a fully media-literate public would be less dependent and/or more akin to active co-producers of media-messages. In fact, the products of a successful media education programme would presumably demand an active (popular) communication system of the Mattelart or Habermasian sort. A 'top-down' consumer-only media would no longer be acceptable.

Teaching all future (and present) media producers and users about the relationship between power and ideas would make for a more 'rational' use of media. CCS's argument is that both media workers and consumers would benefit from media-instruction that contextualizes media in these terms (Tomaselli, 1986b). The manipulative power of media (or perhaps more specifically the power of the controllers/owners of the media) would thereby be reduced. The effect should be to help human beings regain control of the media (and the social communication process), and overcome what the Frankfurt School called the 'culture industry'. This would, in effect 're-humanize' (see Lukacs, 1971; and Marx, 1981) the media, by potentially creating a social dialogue, or public sphere. (In this way a truly interactive democratic cultural production would be facilitated). But an important pre-requisite is for people to learn about the media in its contextual setting. This knowledge will enable people to become active co-manipulators of media variables and thereby co-creators of culture and hegemony. This notion amounts to turning the Frankfurt School on its head: the School was

(rightly) concerned at the way in which the culture industry was able to co-opt even the most oppositional forces, thereby 'killing' the revolutionary 'dialectic'. By turning this School on its head we can arrive at the notion of the Left attempting a counter-co-option: the opportunities and gaps offered by the superstructures developed by MNC should be co-opted for Leftist purposes.

The above approach aims to empower everybody involved within social communication -- media workers and media 'consumers'. There is thus a need to train two separate sectors; or, to put it another way, to train all parties to the process -- namely, producers and receivers. (These these two categories are ideally interchangeable within the communication process). Hence two types of instruction are required:

1. Media worker production. This requires what will be termed Media Training; and
2. The creation of widespread media literacy in the broader public. This will be termed Media Education.

Both are equally important if full popular-democratic use is to be made of the technology available in the Information Age.

Media Training : the Production of Media Workers

By the end of the 1980s South African media workers were generally of a low quality. This is due to two primary causes. Firstly, apartheid and the social crisis it caused chased many of the best media workers out of the profession. The better journalists simply became tired of media restrictions and censorship; and the narrow conservative sycophanticism of most of the 'mainstream' media. Secondly, over the previous two decades media managements (especially in the Press) through staffing and salary policies, created a situation where it was

difficult to attract and retain good media workers. The effect on the circulation of information was negative. South Africa's mainstream media simply failed to deliver a comprehensive picture of society. The white ruling elite, in particular, became victims of a narrow culture industry. This significantly 'blinded' them throughout the 1980s by shielding them from the social dynamics of the South African struggle. (A similar phenomenon occurred in Rhodesia in the 1970s -- see Frederikse, 1982). Because South Africa's media 'consumers' have not been provided with any media education they are seemingly unaware of the extent to which they have been 'short-changed'. So they have not demanded any better. This being the case, media managements in turn saw no need to upgrade their product and/or their media workers. A spiral of declining standards set in.

If people are to make informed decisions about their lives they need information concerning the whole spectrum of events and opinions in society. In this way they are able to make rational behaviourial choices. The fall in journalism standards can be illustrated by, for example, the way the Natal newspapers have handled a crucial local issue like the Natal violence issue (see Emdon, 1990). The incompetent way in which the SABC's senior staffer, Clarence Keyter, reported the biggest news story of 1990 -- the release of Nelson Mandela from prison -- offers another example. If South Africa is to develop into a democratic society the existing poor information flow will need to be addressed: media workers will need to be upgraded as a starting point. This requires training new media workers to a much higher standard than has been the case up to now. And perhaps we also need to think of ways to upgrade many existing media workers.

This leads to the question -- what sort of media training? Media

training to complement a popular media infrastructure will need to be of a particular kind. Firstly, the idea of a purely technicist media training is highly problematic. Media training should go beyond only trying to produce technically competent people. However, technical competence in one's craft is the foundation of being a practicing media worker. Hence, basic techniques and practical skills should be core components of media training. But training in 'technique' should also attempt to stretch the understanding of 'technique' so as to incorporate an understanding of the technological possibilities inherent within any medium for its use for improving democratic discourse, empowering people, etc.

So non-technicist media training is called for (but without abandoning a technical component to the training). However, emphasis would be placed on the need for critical media people. This means media workers who understand: (i) the full range of media theories; (ii) their social context (and its mutability); (iii) the meshing of existing media institutions into the power relationships in society; (vi) possible alternative configurations of media organization/media technology; and (v) the relationship between existing media technology and research-development-funding. This requires an education in critical theory, where the connectedness of theory and practice is emphasized. Len Masterman (1985) has proposed a number of 'theoretical' areas in which media trainers should be conversant, such as: ideology; rhetoric; and audience.

Although it is proposed that media training aims to produce critical, thinking media people, not technicists, it is equally important to recognize that it is also not enough to produce pure media (or

communication) theorists. Karl Korsch's discussion of the danger of 'theoreticism' has already been discussed. Media/communication theorizing can too easily become an ivory tower theoretism and/or an intellectualism outside of a real organic concern with the social context within which media workers have to work. (where is 'Secondly?)

Thirdly, media trainees would ideally be placed into a direct working relationship with community groups as a practical extension of the above training (Tomaselli et al, 1988a). This could be achieved through the proposed nation-wide MRC programme. In other words it could be expected of all media worker trainees (and perhaps media workers themselves) to engage in 'community service' in the MRCs. In other words, in designing media syllabi, it is important that the training institutions (and thereby the trainees) have to form some sort of 'organic relationship' to the energies of the social struggles taking place around them in society. That means learning to consult with community groups in a form which does not grant the media 'experts' a socially superior position by virtue of their knowledge. It means learning practical grassroots democracy. This process should go a long way towards overcoming the arrogance which media workers often display towards those they come into contact with.

Such direct interaction is also an excellent way of teaching media workers to distinguish which interest group wants what; and why. It becomes a way of teaching media workers to understand their relationship to different interest groups in society. This approach helps trainees learn to recognize the link between ideas and the real world. For example, media workers should be trained to recognize how any idea expressed can potentially be picked up by certain vested

interest groups and used by them to serve their own narrow interests for reasons completely unrelated to the original intention of the formulator of the idea.

Fourthly, educators have to build an understanding of 'power' and 'struggle' into their syllabi from the very outset. This is important in order to: (i) avoid having their products co-opted in unintended ways; and (ii) in order to produce media workers who will themselves be less likely to be unintentionally co-opted.

Fifth, trainers must be cautious when using media training methods imported from overseas. The tendency is to rely on methodologies and texts from especially Europe and North America. Teachers of media should first consider the extent to which training methods from the first world perhaps carry with them the ideological baggage of a highly developed technicist society. If so, would using such a method not fail to equip future media workers with knowledge appropriate for the South African context, which has very different social problems to those of Europe or America. In fact, could the uncritical use of first world media-training methodologies not represent another form of cultural colonialism? However, this problematic must not be allowed to develop into the extremist position of rejecting all European/American texts and techniques as necessarily 'imperialist/colonialist' and 'inappropriate' for a so-called Third World situation. Such an attitude can only serve to retard the development of South Africa into a full participant of the Information Age.

## Media Education : the production of a media literate population

The Left needs to engage in a serious re-think about the superstructures and the potential role of the superstructures in

empowerment. For a (New Leftist) mass democracy to operate, all citizens need to be active participants in a multi-directional social dialogue of the sort discussed by Habermas, Mattelart and Enzensberger. But to create such a discourse a basic media literacy is first required. All citizens need to (i) understand the media; (ii) understand its possibilities and limitations; (iii) have access to the media; (iv) be able to critically 'read' media messages; (v) be in a position to make an on-going input into a plural (Poulantzian) media system if they so wish; (vi) recognize the importance of their participation as citizens if democracy is to work; and (vii) believe that their participation does make a difference (ie. feel 'empowered'). Within such a system media workers would become the facilitators of social dialogue, rather than 'experts' with sole access to the production of media messages. In other words, the antithesis of 'top-down' (and manipulative) media systems in both Western Liberal-democracies and in the Marxist-Leninist state socialisms.

If a starting point is required in such a mass media-literacy programme the logical place would be to educate people in 'how to read' a media text critically -- ie. to 'see through' the appearance of 'self-explanatoriness'. Media literacy requires a recognition that there is no such thing as a media message that is a self-explanatory reflection of reality. All media messages are 'constructs' and carry with them the hidden ideological baggage of both their creator and of the creator's context. The South African Left have generally had little difficulty in 'seeing through' the ideological constructs of the NP (eg SABC and Afrikaans Press) or of capital (eg. the English conservative-liberal Press). But they have often been less successful

in seeing through the ideology of newspapers like City Press or The Sowetan; and very uncritical when it comes to reading left-wing media texts. The latter are seen as 'truth' [10]. When building a left-hegemony, the Left should not to replace one form of closed sycophantic media (seen during the NP-hegemony) with another equally closed and sycophantic (but leftist) communication system [11]. Such a 'flip-flop' situation was, for example, witnessed in Zimbabwe. A democracy based upon participative-citizens requires the capacity to read all media texts critically, even those with which one might 'agree'. Some might argue that it is not possible to educate all people into critical media users. A leftist cannot accept such an argument because such acceptance would violate the very basis of the leftist-project.

Creating critical receivers of media messages is a useful, however, only a first step on the road to building a popular-left hegemony. What is important is the recognition that producing critical message-receivers is not sufficient. This is because reception (even critical reception) still implies a second-class status; and/or a de facto acceptance of the superior position of the message-producers. If an interactive-democratic (popular) communication system is to be constructed, then ultimately everybody has to be made a producer (or at least potential producer) of media messages. This is the underlying principle of developing "people's communication" (White, 1989); a principle that should not be dismissed as necessarily utopian, not even in 'developing societies' (see Nair & White, 1987). The information technologies exist for society to solve the impediments in the way of creating a fully popular-democratic (dialogical) communication system. It is now a question of getting policy makers to allocate the necessary resources to solve the problems and to create the necessary popular

communication infrastructures so as to realize the latent possibilities. And one way to nudge society into creating such a network and/or solving any impediments is to create a media literate population who know what possibilities await them in a hegemony re-ordered around a popular communication system.

But because creating a fully-interactive media network will presumably take a long time and considerable resources, a start has to be made somewhere. It would be unrealistic to expect to implement a 'public sphere' network that completely blanketed the country on day one. Rather it would have to be built incrementally. In the intervening period -- and as a preparation for making all citizens interactive media users -- the public could be taught to be critical receivers of media messages. In fact, because of the growing impact of media on the 'second hand' world people now 'live' in, it may well be that in our contemporary world it is far more important to teach school pupils (and even those at tertiary level) how to critically read an everyday media text rather than how to appreciate Shakespeare. Critical users of the media would greatly enhance the possibility for a democratic hegemony. It could even be suggested that an electronic media literacy is becoming more important than printed-text literacy. The point is, once one has learnt to be a critical media receiver, one by definition 'understands media' (and how it is produced, and its possibilities). Thereafter, the transition to becoming an active co-producer of media messages is not such a massive jump.

How does one produce a media literate population? This question has been more comprehensively answered elsewhere, such as Masterman (1985) and Louw, (1990a). In broad outline a media literacy syllabus might

contain sections on: How the media works; information and media technology -- its ontology, its limitations, and its possibilities; and the concepts of 'audience' and 'ideology'; how to read signs, codes and narrative structure. The Frankfurt School's notion of the 'culture industry' can also be useful: it provides a useful basic conceptual framework around which to build a critical media literacy programme.

Teaching Media : turning citizens into media producers

Any attempt to turn the mass of grassroots citizens into active media producers will require a marriage of both media education and media literacy programmes. To be able to drive an Information Age 'public sphere' citizens will need to be media literate (as provided by media education). They will also need the necessary media skills (as provided by media training). A practical way of achieving this would be (i) for MRCs to be organized along the lines of the community media projects discussed by Nigg & Wade (1980), and (ii) for such MRCs to be integrated into a (complementary) primary and secondary school media education programme.

A possible way forward?

For South Africa to realize its full potential, it will need to rethink what 'development' means in the Information Age. It will also need a massive improvement of its education system. But planners should do not necessarily fixate themselves upon merely creating a print-literate population.

Book-literacy is important. But in the contemporary world so too is literacy in the other forms of media, especially the electronic media -- for example, television, film, video, and computers. To be players in the contemporary world South Africans will need to be fully

integrated into the global electronic grid of information. For the Left this creates a particular kind of challenge. This is how to avoid South Africa being integrated into the network as a 'Third (South) World' MNC dependency. In such a scenario South Africans would be integrated merely as passive uncritical 'takers' from a neo-colonial system. Rather, the South African Left have to work at developing a fully media-literate population. This is important in order that (i) South Africans have the opportunity to be critical users of such a global system, and (ii) to be a media trained population so as to be active contributors to such a system. Further, (iii) a serious challenge will be to demonstrate that being a part of the Information Age does not necessarily mean accepting the top-down and alienating relations of production associated with MNC. The Left will need to demonstrate that a left-democratic alternative mode of Information Age social organization can be built. This Habermas calls a "radical democratic process for the formation of public opinion (1990: 19). For Habermas the process of democratic communication should be more important to the Left than the actual content of the communication: he recognizes that democratic communication is the key mean to "re-distribute power". This, for Habermas, represents the heart of the Leftist project in the wake of the collapse of the Marxist-Leninist interpretation of the leftist project (Habermas, 1990:19). In the South African context specifically, 'participation', 'development' and 'media/ communication' need to be worked into a single programme for building a post-apartheid society with democratic (and more equally distributed) power-relationships.

This opens up the exciting possibilities for South African leftists

as they move from counter-hegemony to hegemony construction. The challenge is not merely benefiting from the latest socio-technological developments derivative of the Information Age, but also potentially enhancing democracy in this society by creatively using the the latest media technology. The challenge is to grasp the opportunities offered by the flux of the post-apartheid reconstruction of society to demonstrate that a left-popular democracy can be built by co-opting the technologies developed by MNC.

FOOTNOTES

[1] The popularist phase of struggle has created a political culture built on the principle of 'consultation with the masses'. To some extent this culture is no longer served leftist praxis in the 1990s. Continually waiting for 'mandates' from 'the masses', and/or waiting for 'mandated people' to act has paralyzed action. In his closing address to the ANC's national consultative conference in December 1990, Nelson Mandela called attention to the impossibility for any leadership to 'consult' grassroots over every decision (New Nation, 21.12.1990: 5). One example would be that very few people are actually interested in 'media/communication policy'. It the Left are going to await the successful outcome of mass consultation on this issue the result might be that no media/communication policy ever emerges. Perhaps there needs to be a recognition that 'consultation' itself is not always 'democratic'. Firstly, the call for 'consultation' can be used by skillful populists and vanguardists for their own political ends. Secondly, 'consultation' as an organizing principle needs to be used with great circumspection. It can easily lend itself to a 'Khmer Rouge'-type (anarchist) logic and hence become anti-organizational and paralyze all action by 'blocking' instead of 'facilitating' creative developments.

    What would be helpful in this regard is to learn to differentiate between 'consultation' and 'participation'. The former too easily lends itself to populist co-option (a real danger from a future reformed-Right if it wins some comprador allies). On the other hand participative structures (public spheres) -- based upon people becoming involved at the grassroots (with matters that interested them) -- is less likely to lead to a populist anarchism or to be co-opted by skillful populist leaders. This is where a democratic communication infrastructure acts as a corrective. A national 'public sphere' could institutionalize a ('direct') 'participative' political culture, and hence remove the necessity for 'consultation' based on (two-step) 'representative' logic.

[2] Creating MRCs need not entail the construction of entirely new infrastructures, and/or a massive resource outlay. Rather, it

requires creative thinking. For example, every school, college and university in the country already has some of the infrastructure required by an MRC. Such institutions already blanket the country. Creating MRCs could therefore, initially involve primarily a re-arrangement of existing resources around such educational nodes (and, of course fighting bureaucratic red tape and vested interests which might block such developments). Such an education-based network alone would give an enormous percentage of the population relatively easy access to MRCs. Then too, other social actors might be incorporated into an MRC development scheme, for example religious bodies. There already-exists a massive countrywide network of churches, mosques, temples, synagogues, etc. This network could provide a significant rudimentary shell for MRC construction.

[3] Certain sections of left and liberal opinion, for example, argue that allocating funding to basic housing is more important than media during post-apartheid reconstruction. Housing is important, but so to is democracy. And, in any case, a participative media infrastructure (and the training to use it) represents, in the long run, a greater guarantee of housing for all: by empowering people with such a democratic communication system, all would be given the means to make their demands heard on an on-going basis (for housing, jobs schools, etc). The key to democratic development is to give people the means to decide for themselves what they want, and the means to articulate their wants. A democratic communication system is central to such development.

Another argument against such media development is that the South African masses are not 'ready' for such 'first world' infrastructures. This sort of logic applauds the rural-peasant-based 'African model' of development (Barratt-Brown, 1984: Chapter 14). This is a strangely 'patronizing' and 'colonial' mind set. It implies that Africans are not ready for so-called first world technology and that Africa needs 'appropriate technology' (Robinson, 1979; and Schumacher, 1974: Chapter 12). 'Appropriate' means 'less sophisticated' which, in a sense, implies keeping Africa 'backward'. It is thus surprising that so many Africans have adopted this pro-rural approach (see Nyerere, 1968; and Onyemelukwe, 1974). If consulted, it seems unlikely that most South Africans would opt for the 'backward looking' route if they were given the choice. South Africa has the resources to integrate virtually all its citizens into an urban-based Information Age society within a reasonable time frame, if the will is there to do so. But this will require a significant rearrangement of existing resources via a 'development scheme' to create the infrastructures and provide the necessary training.

In this regard I disagree with those who oppose, as a matter of principle, all aspects of the "integration model" in favour of "self-reliance" (see White & McDonnell, 1983: 18-19). These principles, although motivated by a positive desire to avoid 'dependency', often, in practice, translate into a 'backward looking' model of development. As Enzensberger noted, a refusal to get ones hands dirty (ie. an anti-integration approach) may well be

the anti-progressive and reactionary route.

[4] For an application of a Gramsci-Poulantzas approach to a media problematic see this author's attempts to link 'libertarian' and 'socialist' principles in the formation of a media policy (Louw, 1990).

[5] White (1982: 22-24) has also raised the question of the potential danger that elites could allow the development of local media as a form of tokenism. In such a scenario, local participatory media become a way of deflecting that which threatens established ruling elite interests. This is done by turning this media into a sort of 'side show'. In other words, local media can become a way of creating a non-threatening space that does not really impact upon the main national debate.

[6] Two of the British Community media projects described by Nigg & Wade (1980) hold interesting insights which could be incorporated into a South African MRC-network. These are:

* The West London Media Workshop (WLMW) was a 1970s attempt to use media as a vehicle for mobilizing a grassroots public sphere. Despite issues that called for community action to redress them, those living in this run-down area seemed incapable of organizing themselves into a community. The aim of WLMW was to strengthen the political and social cohesion of a deprived neighbourhood. WLMW was but one media project housed in the West London Community Action Centre. Public-funding was made possible because of Labour Party control at the local municipal level. WLMW saw itself as locating video equipment and communication skills in the community on a permanent basis and allowing skills to develop through contact. WLMW media activists sought to prevent themselves becoming a specialist team producing polished consumer products FOR the community. Rather they facilitated local people taking control of their own lives and learning to control the flow of information (about themselves) within, and out of, their community (instead of merely relying on external - top-down - communication from the BBC or commercial newspapers). WLMW thus facilitated community-based people learning to operate a grassroots popular communication system. Media skills were not learnt in abstract, but were rather diffused so as to encourage people to mobilize themselves around a broad range of issues, eg. housing, community facilities, education, etc. The wider community became involved because the equipment and facilitators were located within the community. This ultimately helped to diffuse the messages produced to a wider audience because one project led organically to the next. By putting equipment into the hands of an active group of local people exciting interactive processes were generated. Different community groups began to come forward with ideas for videos. In these cases the emerging community-based media group worked with that community organisation so as to jointly produce the video. A directory of videotapes was eventually compiled and distributed widely amongst educators and social workers. This increased the distribution of the tapes (and their 'issues') outside immediate locality so that a wide audience was ultimately reached.

* Channel 40 was a state-funded local Cable Television Station set up in mid-1970s in Milton Keynes to improve communication and the information flow within this new English town. As 'community television' it was not about newsworthiness, but about 'the ordinary', and what concerned the grassroots community. As "open-access" media it was specifically not run by professionals (who decide what is appropriate as 'news'). Rather, it is run by the community itself. They decided for themselves what to communicate. Any resident could opt to get involved as a programme maker. In other words s/he could learn to use the portable, battery-operated cameras; or the mobile recording unit; or help in the studio as a presenter or camera operator. Or could opt to merely be a viewer of the programmes (geared to information, community affairs, local entertainment or local sports). The primary requirement for the scheme was portable equipment which could be loaned out to the community; full-time staff to maintain and manage the equipment; and a studio with post-production and editing facilities. Channel 40 was continually 'advertised' by staffers to motivate the community to make use of the facility. Permanent technicians were available to provide (technical) help during the production process. But these technicians played no role at all in the actual content being broadcast. The cameras were operated by community volunteers, while the control room was run by the employed staff. The mobile unit was operated by volunteers together with staffers. In order to operate as a training scheme, technical staffers were intentionally self-effacing (ie. they made 'suggestions' rather than gave 'instructions'). As facilitators they needed to remain neutral and 'passive', although this proved difficult to maintain.

[7] Of course, the implications of facilitating and encouraging people to 'speak for themselves' is that they might use such public spheres to arrive at anti-leftist positions. The challenge for the Left is to: (i) learn to compete with other positions for popular support. In a New Leftist Gramscian-Poulantzian conception of hegemony, it is for the Left to engage in hegemonic struggle to win the consent, support and participation of the majority for leftist policies; and (ii) if such a democracy resulted in the majority opting for non-leftist social organization (because leftists were unsuccessful at winning majority support), then the Left would have to accept such an outcome, since it would be regarded as unacceptable to 'impose' (undemocratically) leftist policies onto a society. (This would, however, not prevent the Left from re-engaging in struggle to win back support).

[8] The Media Resource Centre at the University of Natal (MRC-UND) grew out of the 1985 'Media in Education and Development' (see Kendall, 1988) conference. It has aimed to provide training, production facilities, and media information/research data to educators, community groups and trade unionists, and to help empower groups traditionally disempowered in South Africa. Although not always fully realized, the project was an attempt to redress the skewed distribution of media and training resources -- ie. underprivileged communities and counter hegemonic groups traditionally had no access to such resources (MRC Annual Report, 1989). At the heart of

this MRC is a large workshop and media production area on the University of Natal's Durban campus. Ideally this facility should have been located nearer to the underprivileged communities it aimed to service. (The campus is located in a high income area, not easily accessible to poor communities). However, in the 1980s it was safer to locate such facilities (servicing the Left) on university campuses because they were then less likely to be bombed by agents of the rightist state. Facilities at MRC-UND included: copiers, computers, binding equipment, cameras, light tables, button-making machines, audio-visual equipment, a video duplication rack, etc. The workshop area was open during office hours and arrangements could be made for evening and weekend use by community and trade union groups. The MRC thereby acted as a collective media resource point in the Durban area during the second half of the 1980s. It was used by groups who would otherwise have been debarred from active media work by a lack of access to facilities, and hence acted a resource that proved to be of great value, to those building the Durban-based affiliates of the MDM in the 1980s. The MRC's intervention thereby altered power-relationships in the Durban area, although not necessarily in ways planned and anticipated by the formulators of the original project. The original formulation was perhaps too idealistic in so far as it was not built upon a rigorous consideration of what constituted an 'underprivileged community'; it ignored the way in which an MRC based at UND would translate into an 'empowering' of the facilitators within MRC projects; and it was premised upon a critical theory with contradictory underpinnings (Deacon, 1991: 6). For a more detailed discussion of theoretical problems and issues associated with the MRC-UND project see Deacon (1991) and Tomaselli & Prinsloo (1990).

[9] There is currently a dearth of 'critical' and 'aware' media users and producers in South Africa. This was confirmed by DMTG research during 1989. DMTG, with assistance from CCMS, distributed questionnaires to all community and trade union groups in the greater-Durban area to ascertain: what media was being used; what media-skills members of these groups already had; and what media-training they desired. The processing of the questionnaires was followed up by two all-day workshops with these community groups/unions to report-back on and consolidate the research-finding. The DMTG found generally low levels of media-skills and media literacy, and a serious need for media training/education. The pattern in other South African centres is unlikely to be different.

[10] This 'grading' of the 'ability'/'inability' of Leftists to 'read' media texts is derived from a series of (DMTG-organized) workshops run by this author during 1990.

[11] During 1991 a worrying trend has manifested itself in South Africa's townships, namely a sychophantic adherence to the political party of one's choice combined with complete intolerance to those holding other views (see Cargill, 1991). Unless checked, this growing intolerance will undermine any attempt to create a democratic media system based on a 'culture of debate'.

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